

# ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

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CONDUCTED BY CHARLES DICKENS.

WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED HOUSEHOLD WORDS.

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## BLACK SHEEP!

BY THE AUTHOR OF "LAND AT LAST," "KISSING THE ROD," &c. &c.

### BOOK II.

#### CHAPTER VII. A DILEMMA.

SOUTH MOLTON-STREET had apparently a strong attraction for Mr. James Swain. Perhaps he found it a profitable and productive situation in point of odd and early jobs, perhaps he had some less professional reason for frequenting it. However that may be, the fact existed that no day passed without his tousled head and imperfectly clad form making their appearance in the street two or three times between dawn and dark. He would hang about the precincts of the house in which Routh and Harriet lodged, and evinced an extraordinary preference for the archway in the vicinity as a dining-room. He might have been seen at irregular hours devouring saveloys, polonies, or, when jobs odd or even were not plentiful, hunches of bread and cheese, within the shelter of the archway, in the most unsophisticated attitudes, and with great apparent enjoyment. Mr. James Swain's face was not free from the underlying expression of care and anxiety which is always to be found by the careful observer in the countenance of the London street-boy, but it had more than the usual complement of sauciness, cunning, readiness, and impudence.

The boy had quite an attraction for Mrs. Routh, who would smile at him when she passed him in the street, nod pleasantly to him occasionally from her window, when his business or pleasure led him to lounge past the house before she had left her bedroom of a morning, and who frequently sent him of errands, for the doing of which she rewarded him with a liberality which appeared to him astounding munificence. Mr. James Swain was of a temperament to feel kindness, neglected street-boy though he was, and he had been wonderfully impressed by the womanly compassion which had spoken to him in Harriet's gentle tones on the morning of their first meeting, and had looked out of all the trouble and foreboding in her blue eyes. His interest in the Routh household, however, antedated that event, and received not only an additional access, but a fresh colouring from it, and an acute observer, supposing one to exist

for whom so mean a matter as the mental condition of a street-boy, very vulgar indeed, and without a particle of sentimental interest about him, could possess any attraction, would have discerned that a struggle of some sort was going on in the mind of the frequenter of South Molton-street, and seeker of odd jobs.

Routh, also, was not without interest for Jim Swain. Perhaps he watched him even more closely than he watched Harriet, but if he did, it was with totally different feelings. Routh had considerable powers of self-command, and could always be civil and apparently good tempered, no matter what his real humour might be, when it accorded with his interests to be so. But he was not a man to treat inferiors with courtesy, or to refrain from rudeness and brutality where they were safe, and unlikely to do him any discredit. Consequently, servants and other recipients of the outpourings of his temper hated him with a vivid cordiality. Jim, the street-boy, had been employed by him occasionally, and had formed, apart from certain other knowledge he had gained concerning Mr. Stewart Routh, the worst opinion of that gentleman's disposition and character.

"He's a bad 'un, anyhow," the boy muttered, as he watched Mr. Routh letting himself into the house he inhabited with his latch-key, having previously taken a handful of letters from a postman at the door. "An ill-lookin' dog, too. Scowled at the letters as if he was a-goin' to eat 'em. P'raps they're love-letters. I shouldn't wonder, now, as the lady is a pinin' for some 'un else, and he's jealous, and gets hold on all the letters to catch her out."

This bright idea, which Jim Swain derived from his habitual reading of penny romances, devoted to the delineation of the tender passion, afforded him considerable gratification, and he had already consumed several minutes and a cold sausage while turning it over in his mind, when Harriet Routh came out of the house, and passed him, as he leaned against the wall under the archway. She was very pale and quite absorbed in thought, so that, though the lad respectfully pulled a tuft of his tousled hair in salutation, she did not perceive his presence.

"She's not like the same woman," mused Mr. James Swain; "she's gone as white as anything; looks just as if she'd had to git her own livin' for ever so long, and found it precious

hard to git, too. If he's jealous of her, and a ill treatin' of her, blowed if I won't peach! No, no, I won't, though, leastways not yet, 'cause I can't without lettin' out on myself, too; but," said the boy, with a long look which softened the cunning of his face strangely, "I would like to know as she was happier than I think she is."

In the wide city of London there was not another human being to feel any such wish in connexion with Harriet Routh. She was quite alone. She had so willed it, and circumstances had aided her inclination and her resolve. In the life which her husband had adopted, and she had accepted, intimacies, friendships, were impossible. The only relation between them and their kind was the relation between the swindler and his dupes, always a merely "business" connexion, and generally very brief in its duration. Harriet had not a female friend in the world. Perhaps she would not have had one under any circumstances; she was not a woman to cherish sentiment; the one love of her life was an overmastering passion, which had absorbed all lesser feelings; and the secretiveness and reserve, which were large elements in her moral nature, would have been inimical to such association, which, above all, needs gushiness for its satisfactory development. Her husband's male friends saw her seldom, and were not observant or interested in the health, spirits, or appearance of any but themselves; so there was no one but the street-boy to note the change that had passed upon her. Routh, indeed, observed it; with the bitter, selfish impatience of his character, and silently resented it. But only silently; he made no comment, and Harriet, for the first time, failed to interpret his feelings.

She *was* changed. Changed in face, in manner, in voice, in the daily habits of her life. The light had faded from her blue eyes, and with it their colour had paled. Her cheek had lost its roundness, and there was something set and stony in her face. It had been calm, now it was rigid. Her voice, still low and refined, was no longer musical, and her words were rare. Personal habits are tenacious, and rarely yield, even to strong mental excitement, or under the pressure of anxious care, and Harriet, always neat and careful in her simple dress, was neat and careful still. But a close observer would have marked a change even in this respect. She cared for her looks no longer. An ill-assorted ribbon, or ill-chosen colour, would once have been impossible to Harriet Routh; but it was all the same to her now. What were the symptoms of the moral change that had passed upon her as distinctly as the physical? They were rather those of intensification than of alteration. Her determination had assumed a sternness which had not before marked it, her identification of herself with Routh had become more than ever complete. The intensity of the passion with which she loved him was hardly capable of increase, but its quiet was gone. The pliable ease, the good-fellowship, the frank equality of

their companionship, had departed; and though her attention to his interests, her participation in his schemes, were as active and unceasing as ever, they were no longer spontaneous, they were the result of courageous and determined effort, sustained as only a woman can sustain effort which costs her acute and unrelenting suffering. She had been much alone of late. Routh had been much and profitably occupied. The affairs of the new company were progressing favourably, and Routh's visits to Flinders were frequent and well received. He had other things of the sort on hand, and his finances were in a flourishing condition. He was on the road to success, after the fashion of modern successes, and if his luck did not change, all the respectability which attaches to a fortunate speculation was on the cards for Stewart Routh. No restoration to his former place was possible, indeed; but Routh cared nothing for that, would, perhaps, not have accepted such a restoration had it been within his reach. Struggle, scheming, shifts, and the excitement consequent thereon, were essential to him now; he liked them; the only game he could play with any relish was the desperate one. To what extent he had played it was known only to himself and Harriet, and he was beginning to be afraid of his confederate. Not afraid of her trustworthiness, of her fidelity, of her staunch and unshrinking devotion; Stewart Routh was just as confident, as of the fact of his existence, that his wife would cheerfully have given her life for him, as she gave it to him, but the man's nature was essentially base, and the misused strength, the perverted nobility of hers, crushed and frightened him. He had not felt it so much while they were very poor, while all their schemes and shifts were on a small scale, while his every-day comforts depended on her active management and unflinching forethought. But now, when he had played for a great stake and won it, when a larger career was open before him—a career from which he felt she would shrink, and into which he could never hope to force her—he grew desperately afraid of Harriet. Desperately tired of her also. He was a clever man, but she was cleverer than he. He was a man of strong passions, ungovernable, save by the master-passion, interest. She had but one, love; but it was stronger than all his put together. And told to do their worst, and his shallow nature shrank from the unknown depths of hers. She loved him so entirely that there had never been a question of rule between them; but Routh was a wise man in his way, and he knew in his heart he could rule Harriet only by love, and love which was perfectly genuine and true, should the time ever come in which a distinct separation of opinion and will between them should make it necessary for him to try. But he had a clear appreciation of his wife's intellect also, and he knew thoroughly well that he could not deceive her with any counterfeit presentment—the love which should rule her must be real. This was precisely what he had not to produce when re-

quired. He had loved her after his fashion for so long that he was rather surprised by his own constancy; but it would have been difficult for Stewart Routh to go on loving any one but himself always, and Harriet was so much superior to him in strength, firmness, and disinterestedness, that her very superiority was an element of destruction for the love of such a man as he.

In all that concerned the business of Stewart Routh's life, Harriet's conduct was still the same as before—she was still industrious and invaluable to him. But the occupations which had filled her leisure hours were all neglected now, the lonely time was no more lightened by the pursuits which her early education and her natural tastes had endeared and rendered habitual to her. One of two moods now possessed her, either uncontrollable restlessness or absorbed brooding. She would start off, when Routh had left her, and walk for hours through the crowded thoroughfares, out into the suburbs of London, or up and down the most distant and least-frequented parts of the Parks, returning home weary and footsore, but with the torturing sense of restlessness unsubdued. Or, when she was alone, she would sit for hours, not in a selected position of comfort, but anywhere, on the first seat that came in her way, her head drooping, her eyes fixed and vacant, her hands closely clasped and lying in her lap, her fair low brow contracted by a stern and painful frown. From either of these two moods she rarely varied; and even in Routh's presence, one or the other would master her at times. It chanced that on the day when Jim Swain had seen Routh return to his lodgings, and take some letters from the postman, the restless fit had come very strongly upon Harriet, and she had gone to her room to dress herself for walking, when Routh unexpectedly returned. He went into the sitting-room, and concluding she would be down-stairs presently, waited for her, reading the letters in his hand frowningly the while. But Harriet had passed quietly down the stairs and gone out, without re-entering the sitting-room, and Routh waited in vain. At length he sought her in her room, and not finding her, he angrily rang the bell, and asked the servant if she knew anything about her. She did not, and Routh dismissed her, and began to stride about the room, uttering very uncalled-for objurgations on women who were never in the way when they were wanted. As he passed the window, his eye fell upon Jim Swain tranquilly eating bread and cheese, as he leaned against the opposite railings. Routh looked at him again more closely, and again; finally, he took up his hat, went down-stairs, out of the door, and across the street, close up to the boy.

"Hollo, you sir!" he addressed him roughly. "What are you doing here?"

Mr. James Swain eyed his questioner with no pleasant or grateful expression of countenance, and replied, curtly:

"Nothin'!"

"What brings you here, then?" continued Routh.

"I ain't a doin' you any harm, am I?" answered the boy, all his native impudence brought out in a moment by the overbearing manner of Routh. "It ain't your street, I believe, nor yet your archway, as I knows on; and if I chooses to odd job on this here lay, I don't hurt *you*, do I?"

The saucy manner of the lad did not anger Routh; he hardly seemed to notice it, but appeared to be entirely possessed by some struggling remembrance not of a pleasing kind, if his expression afforded any correct clue to it.

"Have you seen a lady come out of No. 60 since you have been about here?" he asked, passing by the boy's saucy remarks as if he had not heard them.

"Yes, I have. I saw the lady as lives there, not two minutes after you came in. She went that way." And he pointed down the street.

"Had she anything in her hand? Did she look as if she was going for a walk, or out shopping?"

"She hadn't no basket or bag, and she warn't partickler dressed; not as nice as she's dressed sometimes. *I should say*," continued Mr. Jim Swain, with an air of wisdom and decision, "as she was goin' for a constitutional, all by herself, and not to shop nor nothin'."

Routh's attention had wandered from the boy's words and was fixed upon his face.

"Have I ever seen you before?" he asked him, abruptly.

A sudden rush of colour dyed Mr. James Swain's face, even through the varnish of dirt which hid its surface, as he replied, with a little less than his customary boldness:

"Yes, sir, you've seen me, though in course you ain't likely to remember it. You've giv' me many a penny, and a sixpence too, and the lady."

Again Routh looked steadily, but covertly, at him under his thick brows. He was evidently eager to ask him some question, but he refrained, restrained by some powerful motive. Jim looked uneasily up and down the street, moved his feet about restlessly, turned his ragged pockets inside out, letting loose a multitude of dirty crumbs, and displayed a fidgety inclination to get away from South Molton-street.

"Well," said Routh, rousing himself from his abstraction, "we're going to move next week, and you can come and do the odd jobs for us, if you like."

"Thankee, sir," said Jim, who was very respectful now, and touched his ragged cap as if he had quite altered his opinion of the speaker.

"What day shall I come, sir?"

"I don't exactly know," said Routh; "you can call and ask the lady." And then he gave the lad a shilling, to Jim Swain's intense surprise, and, crossing the street, once more let himself in at the door of No. 60. Having

reached the sitting-room, Stewart Routh sat down by the window and fell into a fit of musing as deep as those in which Harriet Routh passed hours away.

Mr. James Swain went briskly down the street, pleasantly conscious that the unexpected windfall of the shilling had released him from the labours of his calling for the day, and determined to proceed at once to lay it out to the greatest advantage.

"Whatever is he up to *now*?" Thus ran the street-boy's thoughts. "I'm sure he's jealous, or he wouldn't be coming home unexpected, and a watchin' of her like that. Ain't he a brute just? And a willin' too? Well, I'm glad I ain't *sure*—I'm very glad I ain't *sure*."

With this enigmatical phrase, Mr. James Swain abandoned his mental colloquy, and directed his thoughts to more immediately personal matters.

Routh was still sitting by the window when Harriet returned, and with the first glance at his face she saw that something new had occurred.

"I did not expect you home until six o'clock," she said, as she laid aside her bonnet, and stood by his side, laying her hand tenderly upon his shoulder.

"No," he returned; "I came home to get some papers for Flinders about the Tunbridge Canal business; but you have them, Harry, and you were out."

"Well?" she said, calmly, looking at him with questioning eyes. "What has happened, Stewart?"

"This," he returned, slowly, and without meeting her gaze. "As I came in I met the postman with this letter. Read it, and tell me what is to be done."

She sat down close beside him, and took the letter he held towards her. It was addressed to George Dallas, to the care of Routh, and it was, in fact, the letter which Mr. Carruthers had written to his step-son prior to his departure from Poynings. As Harriet read, her right hand sought her husband's, and held it tightly. The old look of quiet resolution, the old expression of confident resource, came into her face. She read the paper twice before she spoke.

"Stewart," she said, "this is only another head of the hydra, and we had counted them, had we not? What we have to decide is, whether this letter shall be suppressed, or whether it must be forwarded to George Dallas. At first sight, I see no possibility of suppressing it without infinite danger, but this is only first sight, and we may see more clearly afterwards."

"Dallas has never said anything to you about letters from his mother, has he?" asked Routh.

"No," replied Harriet, "not since his second letter, when he said he supposed she was testing his repentance and good conduct, and that he would not write until he could give her some proof of both."

"Get the old woman's letter, and let us read it again."

Harriet went to her writing-table, opened a drawer, and took a paper from its recesses. It was the letter which Mrs. Brookes had written to George Dallas. The two read it carefully, and Harriet spoke first.

"We can only conjecture the meaning of this, Stewart; but, as I make it out, it means that the proceedings at the—the inquest"—she paused almost imperceptibly, then went on, in a steady tone—"awakened his mother's fears. It was lucky he told us the story of his mother's anxiety about his coat, or we should have failed to catch the clue. Now I read the riddle thus: Mrs. Carruthers has been dangerously ill in consequence of the shock of the discovery, but she has not betrayed her knowledge or suspicions. A good deal of time has been gained, and under any circumstances that is a priceless advantage. The question now is, can any more time be gained? Can George Dallas be kept in ignorance of the appearances against him any longer? The suppression of the old woman's letter was an easy matter. It is ill-written, you see, as servants' letters usually are, indistinctly addressed, and generally unimportant. But a letter written by Mr. Carruthers of Poynings is quite another matter. It must come out, some time or other, that it was not received, and he is precisely the man to investigate the matter to the utmost. No, no, the letter must be sent to Dallas."

She spoke firmly, but her eyes were dreamy and distant. Routh knew their expression, and that some expedient, some resolve, was shaping itself in her mind. He sat quite silent until she spoke again.

"The first thing we have to do is to ascertain with all possible exactitude the real condition of Mrs. Carruthers, where she is at present, and whether we are right in supposing her fears were excited. This letter is not calculated to bring George home, I think. Of course, if it had reached him before they left Poynings, he would have come home at once; but, see, Mr. Carruthers writes on the 10th, and says they are to start on the 11th. This is the 13th. What is the postmark?"

"Dover," said Routh, handing her the envelope.

"Posted after they left England, no doubt," said Harriet. "Stewart, there is just one thing to be done. Let us move from this at once. It is only doing so a little sooner than we had intended. Then, if we decide on suppressing the letter, its loss may be accounted for, even to the satisfaction of Mr. Carruthers. This while we consider what must be done."

"Yes," said Routh, "I think that will be wise; but I do not see my way out of the danger of his return, if he returns when he has received the letter. He will go down to Amherst at once, and will discover the suspicion, and at once take steps to clear himself of it."

"Perhaps so," said Harriet, and her face darkened, "but he may not find that so easy. I



hope he will not put himself into the danger; but if he does——" She paused, and looked thoughtfully into her husband's face, while a quick shudder crept over her. He saw the look in her eyes, he felt the quiver in her hand, and frowned darkly.

"Don't take to melodrama, Harriet, it's so unlike you, and doesn't suit you. Besides, it's too late in the day for that kind of thing now."

She took no notice of the ungracious speech, but still stood looking thoughtfully at him. He rose, letting her hand drop from his shoulder, and walked up and down the room.

"Stewart," she said, gently, "you must not be impatient with me if I am not as ready of resource as I was. However, I think I see what ought to be done in this emergency, and I am quite sure I can do it. I will go to Amherst, find out the true state of things there, see the old woman at Poynings, who will gladly receive me as a friend of George Dallas, and then, and then only, can we decide whether this letter is to reach him or not."

"By Jove! Harry, that's a splendid idea," said Routh, "and there can't be any risk in it, for Dallas would take your doing it as the greatest kindness. You not so ready of resource as you were? You're more so, my girl—you're more so."

There was a little wonder in the look she turned upon him, a little surprise at the lightness of his tone, but not a ray of the pleasure which his perverted praise had once given her.

"This is the best thing to do," she said, gravely, "and I will do it at once. I will go to-morrow morning."

"And I will get our traps moved, and put up at the Tavistock till you come back. You can pack this evening, I suppose, Harry?"

"Oh yes," she answered. "I shall be glad of the occupation."

"And you'll do it more easily without me," said Routh, whom no crisis of events, however serious, could render indifferent to his individual comforts, and to whom the confusion of packing was an image of horror and disgust, "so I shall dine out, and leave you to your own devices. Here, you had better lock these up." He took the letters from a table on which she had laid them as she spoke, and held them towards her.

She drew a step nearer to him, took the papers from his hand, then suddenly let them drop upon the floor, and flung her arms wildly round Routh's neck.

"Harriet, Harriet," he said, "what's this?" as he strove to lift her face, which she held pressed against his breast with terrible force. She answered him with a groan—a groan so full of anguish, that his callousness was not proof against it.

"My love, my darling, my brave girl, don't, don't!" was all he could say, as he bent his head over her, and held her tightly to him. For several moments she stood thus; then she lifted her white face, put up her hands and drew his face down to hers, kissed him with kisses which thrilled him with an unknown sense of fear and doom, and instantly releasing, left him.

Mr. James Swain got the promised odd job in South Molton-street sooner than he had expected it, for calling at No. 60, according to Mr. Routh's instructions, to ask the lady when his services would be required, he was informed that she had gone away, and he was to carry down the boxes to be conveyed to their destination in the van then standing at the door. Jim performed his duty with a perturbed spirit.

"Gone away, is she?" he said, over and over again. "Now I should like to know where she's gone, and wot for. I hope he ain't be up to nothin' again her, but I don't trust him, and I ain't a goin' to lose sight of him for longer than I can help, if I knows it, until she's safe back somewheres."

"That funeral is largely attended for a small town," said Harriet Routh to the waiter at the inn at Amherst, who was laying the cloth for her dinner. She was sitting by a window on the ground floor, and idly watching the decorous procession as it passed along the main street, to the huge admiration of gaping boys and gossiping nursemaids.

"Yes, ma'am," replied the man, gladly seizing the opportunity of approaching the window, and having a peep on his own account.

"He was very much respected, was old Mr. Evans; no one in the town more so. He gave the best of measures, and used the best of materials, and a charitabler man, nor a constanter at meetin', though uncommon deaf latterly, ain't in Amherst."

Harriet looked inquiringly at the speaker.

"I beg your pardon, ma'am, you're a stranger, of course, and don't know nothin' about poor old Evans. He were a tailor, ma'am, at Amherst, man and boy, for fifty year and more, and got a deal of custom, which they do say no tailor here won't have for the future, seein' as they can't compete with the Sydenham suits."

Harriet made no comment upon the man's little discourse, and he left the room. When she was alone, she smiled a smile not good to see, and said, half aloud:

"I remember how they used to talk about Providence, and providential interventions on behalf of the good, long ago, when I used to fancy I believed in Providence, and when I certainly did believe in the existence of the good. I wonder what these people would call *this*? If it is a providential intervention, the theory has two sides."

#### CHAPTER VIII. ON THE DEFENSIVE.

THE announcement of a lady who wished to see Mrs. Brookes caused the faithful old woman no particular emotion. She was well known and much respected among the neighbours of Poynings, in the humbler sense, and visits from several of their number were ordinary events enough in her life. The announcement found her, not in her own room, but in her mistress's, where she had replaced the portrait of George, and was sitting looking at it with dim eyes and

clasped hands. The time had been long in rolling over her weary old head; for, though she had passed the period of life in which feeling is very keen, and sorrow has power to torture, and constancy to last, Mrs. Brookes had no other objects to divide her thoughts with Mrs. Carruthers and her son, and day by day the old woman had brooded upon the new trouble which had come to those whom she loved so well. Perplexity mingled with her grief, for she knew not what to think. She had stoutly denied the possibility of George's guilt, in the memorable dialogue which had been the last she had held with his mother; but the faint and fluttering hope she entertained was very different from the confidence she expressed, and now, in the solitude and silence of the great house, in the absence of the absorbing demand which Mrs. Carruthers's condition had made upon all her attention and self-command, her stout old heart sank within her. His mother was gone away from all the scenes and associations which had come to have a terrible meaning. Would she ever return? Ellen hardly knew how she wished to answer this question. It were better and happier perhaps that she never did, that her tired heart should drowsily beat itself to rest in a strange country, and lie hidden under another soil than that her son had stained with blood. Had he done this thing? What of him? Where was he? The orderly house, the well-regulated household, needed little of the old housekeeper's supervision. The absence of the family made little difference. No cleaning days interrupted the decorous order of things in an establishment in which it would have savoured of indecorum to suppose that the rule of absolute cleanliness was ever superseded. Alterations and repairs were innovating interruptions altogether incompatible with Poynings, and, in fact, there was little or nothing to break the dead level to which old Ellen had looked forward as that of her days when she should be left alone in the stately house, and which had begun to realise itself at once.

Dixon had accompanied her mistress to foreign parts; and it was Martha, housemaid, who told Mrs. Brookes that a lady, who had been shown into her own room, wanted to see her.

"Which, I dare say, she's come after Susan's character," remarked Martha, parenthetically, "for she ain't this side Hamherst, I know."

Mrs. Brookes rose from the chair that she had placed opposite George's picture, took off her spectacles, from which she wiped a suspicious moisture, placed them carefully in her pocket, arranged her cap and shawl, and, without vouchsafing any answer to the speculations of Martha, she took her way slowly to the housekeeper's room. As she crossed the hall she saw a fly standing at the open door, and the driver, a man from Page's, touched his hat to her as she passed.

"I don't know this lady," she thought. "Nobody about here takes a fly to come to Poynings."

Her visitor was seated on the heavy horse-

hair sofa, which, in the winter, flanked the fire, but was now drawn close under the window through which George had entered on that memorable night, which came freshly into the memory of the old woman at that moment. As she looked sharply at the figure which rose to greet her, Mrs. Brookes felt in a moment that she was in the presence of a woman with some purpose.

The fixedness of Harriet Routh's face, the effort of a smile (for loneliness told upon her nerves now with rapidity and power), a something forced and painful in her voice, aroused an instinctive fear in Mrs. Brookes, and put her on her guard. She made a stiff bow and a movement with her body, which, when she was younger, would have been a curtsy, but was now only a duck, and asked her visitor's pleasure.

"I have called upon you, Mrs. Brookes," said Harriet, in a sweet and winning tone, "in consequence of a paragraph which I have seen in a newspaper."

It was an unfortunate beginning, for it set the old nurse instantly on her guard by arousing her suspicions, and making her resolve that the blue-eyed, sweet-spoken lady, who looked as if she had a purpose, should get nothing out of her.

"Indeed," she replied, very stiffly. "Please to sit down, ma'am."

Harriet resumed her seat, and began to speak rather quickly. Mrs. Brookes looked at her steadily, immovably, having put on her spectacles for the purpose, but gave her neither encouragement nor assistance by so much as a sound or a nod.

"I am Mrs. Routh," she said, "and a friend of Mr. George Dallas, Mrs. Carruthers's son. It is on his account and for his sake I have come here."

Mrs. Brookes's black-mittened hands pressed each other more closely as they lay clasped together in her lap, but she made no sign.

"I am aware of the unfortunate circumstances which keep Mr. Dallas and his mother apart," continued Harriet, who maintained a watch upon the old woman as steady as her own, but more covert; "and I am afraid he will be much distressed and alarmed if this reaches him without any preparation."

She held out a newspaper as she spoke, a newspaper she had procured at the inn at Amherst, and pointed to the paragraph which recorded the departure of Mr. and Mrs. Carruthers of Poynings and suite for the Continent; and, in addition, the regret with which "we" had learned that the departure in question had been occasioned by the dangerous illness of Mrs. Carruthers. Mrs. Brookes was immensely relieved, but not altogether reassured. She had a vague idea that the business of detection was sometimes entrusted to women, and she still had her doubts of the blue-eyed, sweet-spoken lady whose face indicated a purpose, without betraying it.

"Mr. Dallas knows of his mother's illness,"

said Mrs. Brookes. "He will not hear of it first from any newspaper."

"Indeed," said Harriet. "I am glad to know that. I am much relieved. Mr. Dallas is so intimate with Mr. Routh, my husband, and we are so much attached to him, that anything which is of importance to him concerns us. I am on my way to Dover, and I thought I would turn out of it a little to inquire into this matter."

"Thank you, ma'am," said Mrs. Brookes, still unsoftened. "May I ask if you have left your house in London?"

"We have for the present," replied Harriet; "indeed, I don't think we shall return there."

Mrs. Brookes looked confused and distressed.

"Excuse me," she said, after an awkward pause, "if I appear at all impertinent. I am George Dallas's old nurse, and more his mother's friend than her servant, and I can't be particular about other people when they are concerned. George Dallas is not as welcome here as he ought to be in his mother's house; you say you know that. If you really are Mrs. Routh, you ought to know more about him than that—more, in fact, than I do."

"Certainly," said Harriet, with unchanged sweetness of tone, and just the least gleam of colour in her cheek, showing that she was approaching her object. "I do know a great deal more about George Dallas than you do, if, as I conclude from your words, nothing has been heard of him since his last visit to his mother."

She paused very slightly, but Mrs. Brookes did not utter a word.

"You are quite right to be cautious, Mrs. Brookes; in such a delicate family matter as this, caution is most essential. Poor George has been so foolish, that he has laid himself open to being harmed either by enemies or injudicious friends; but I assure you, Mrs. Brookes, I am neither. I really am Mrs. Routh, and I am quite in George's confidence, and am here solely with the purpose of saving him any trouble or anxiety I can."

"Where is he?" asked the old woman, suddenly, as if the question were forced upon her.

"He is at Amsterdam, in Holland," replied Harriet, in a frank tone, and changing her seat for one beside Mrs. Brookes, as she spoke; "here are several letters from him. See," and she drew half a dozen sheets of foreign paper, closely written over, from her pocket, and put them into the old woman's hands. She beheld the letters with mingled pleasure and avoidance: they could not answer the question which tormented her, but they relieved her misgivings about her visitor. She felt assured now that she really was speaking to Mrs. Routh, and that the object of her visit was one of kindness to George. The letters were in his well-known hand; the thin paper and the postmarks satisfied her that they came from abroad. He was still out of the country, then; so far there was safety, but she must be cautious still concerning him. What if she could make Harriet the unconscious

bearer of a further warning to him—a warning carefully contrived so that none but he should know its meaning, and he should understand it thoroughly? She would try. She had thought all this while she turned the letters over in her hands; then she returned them to Harriet, and said:

"Thank you, ma'am. I see these are from Master George, and it's plain he has great confidence in you. He never answered a letter I sent him: it went to your house."

"All communications for him are addressed to Mr. Routh," said Harriet, "and forwarded at once."

"Well, ma'am, he never told me where he had gone to, or wrote a letter but one to his mother; and when that came, she was too ill to read it, or know anything about it."

"Indeed," said Harriet, in a tone of commiseration; "she must have been taken ill just after he saw her, then?"

"She was," returned Mrs. Brookes, emphatically, "and you, ma'am, know, no doubt, why she saw him, and can understand that his conduct caused her illness."

"Not exactly that," said Harriet. "He told me all that had passed, and described his mother as full of forgiveness and hope, and he even said how well and handsome he thought her looking. George amuses us very much by constantly talking of his mother's beauty; he will be all the more distressed when he hears of her illness, now, and I really think, Mrs. Brookes, it cannot be quite fair to impute it to his conduct."

"It was just that, and nothing else," said the old woman; and her voice shook as she spoke, though she strove to control it. "It was, indeed, ma'am, and you must tell him the truth, without softening it, or making it any better. Tell him that she nearly died of the knowledge of his conduct, and that her mind is weakened, and her memory gone."

"Her memory gone!" exclaimed Harriet. "You don't mean to say it is so bad as that?"

"I do, indeed," said Mrs. Brookes. "And will you tell him exactly what I tell you. Tell him that his mother has forgotten all that led to her illness, all the fear and suspense she underwent. Of course she was frightened at what she had to do, and in suspense until it was done; but I am sure she has not forgotten him, and if he were to see her, or even be mentioned to her suddenly, it might have the worst effect. Be sure to tell him this, and that the only thing he can do to atone for the past in any way is to keep out of his mother's sight. He knows some of this already, for I wrote to him, and he knows from Mr. Carruthers that his mother is gone away."

"From Mr. Carruthers?" said Harriet, in a tone of admirably simulated surprise; "does he ever communicate with George?"

"My master is a very just man," replied Mrs. Brookes, in a stately tone, "and he would not allow his wife's son to be kept in ignorance of his mother's danger. I am sure he will

send for him, wherever he may be, if there is no chance of her recovery. I don't say he would send for him sooner."

"Of course Mr. Carruthers has no idea of the cause of Mrs. Carruthers's illness?"

"No, no; it was his fear of his finding out that George had been here, and what for, that brought it on; but, of course, he did not suspect anything."

"It is very strange," said Harriet, musingly; "she seems to have borne all this business perfectly well at the time, and given way completely afterwards. It must have surprised you very much, Mrs. Brookes, though, no doubt, you understand your mistress's constitution."

"Yes," replied the old woman, dryly, and ignoring the beginning of the sentence, "I understand my mistress's constitution."

"I will give your message to Mr. Dallas," said Harriet, rising, "and I had better leave you our temporary address, unless, indeed, you would prefer writing to Mr. Dallas direct."

"No," said Mrs. Brookes, "I have nothing to say. When news of his mother comes from abroad, I will send it to you."

The old woman was constrained and miserable in her visitor's presence, but the hospitality of Poynings must be vindicated; and she felt, besides, that Mrs. Carruthers would, in other days, have been glad of an opportunity of being kind to any one who had been kind to George. So she pressed Harriet to take some refreshment and to prolong her visit. But Harriet would not touch bread or wine in the house, and told Mrs. Brookes she must return to Amherst immediately, to catch the train for Dover. "I dined at the inn in the town," she said, in explanation of her refusal, "as I had to wait awhile before I could get a fly."

"I hope they made you comfortable, ma'am," said Mrs. Brookes, who had resumed, when their interview assumed a common-place complexion, her head-servant-like manner. "Page's people are obliging, and it is a respectable house."

"Very much so indeed," returned Harriet, carelessly. "The town seems a clean dull sort of place. I had a funeral to look at while I waited for my dinner, and the waiter entertained me with the biography of the deceased."

"I had not heard of a death at Amherst," said Mrs. Brookes, primly. She did not like the flippant tone in which her visitor spoke. "The servants have not been in the town this week."

"An estimable person—one Evans, a tailor, I believe; so the waiter said," Harriet returned, still more carelessly, as she took up her parasol and railway-guide, glanced covertly at the old woman's face, and moved to the door.

Mrs. Brookes stood quite still for several seconds; then she followed Harriet, joined her at the red-baize door which opened into the hall, accompanied her to the great door, where a footman waited, took a respectful leave of her, and then shut herself up in her room, and

remained invisible to the household for the remainder of the day.

As Harriet Routh drove back to Amherst, she leaned her head wearily against the uncongenial woodwork of the fly, and summed up the results of her journey.

"Whatever the mother knows, the old woman knows. The old woman is as staunch as steel, and she will conceal her suspicions all the more tenaciously, the stronger they are; and I have strengthened them. What a clever old woman she is, and how brave! If my purpose had been what she suspected, I should have had some real difficulty in getting the information I required. It is clear that nothing is to be feared now, in this direction. Mrs. Brookes will never speak. Mrs. Carruthers is in the best possible condition for our purposes, and her son has no pretext for returning to Poynings, even if the death of the tailor had not made it quite safe for him to do so."

She did not look out upon the fair scene through which she was passing. To her, all beauty of nature was a dead thing; she had no heart-throbs of exultation in "the pomp that fills the summer circuit of the hills;" no sense of its serene loveliness reached her busy brain, or tempted her troubled brooding eyes. When she occasionally lifted them, in shifting her position, they might have been blind for any knowledge of the sunshine or the greenery that was in them. "I will write to him," she went on in her thoughts, "just what she told me to say. Poor George! It is hard to have to make him believe that he has broken his mother's heart, and turned his mother's brain. He does not deserve it, fool as he is. He is easily persuaded, fortunately. I don't feel fit for much that is not easy now. The letter must be sent on at once, and, if I do my part well, and this woman dies, or remains abroad—and I fancy Mr. Carruthers is not the man to bring an imbecile wife back, if he can help it—there's no reason why George should come to England again for years, that I can see."

The driver of the fly pulled up for a minute, and, letting down one of the front windows, inquired whether he was to go to the inn or to the railway station. While Harriet was answering his question by desiring him to drive to the station, and looking out of the window, a young girl on horseback, a large black Newfoundland dog galloping by her horse's side, passed the fly. The driver touched his hat respectfully, and the young lady acknowledged the salute with her whip.

"That's Miss Carruthers, ma'am," said the man to Harriet, giving her the information in a manner which duly indicated the local importance of Miss Carruthers. Harriet looked back at the girl, and noted the golden gleam of her beautiful hair, the easy swaying of her graceful figure, the air of youth and refinement which characterised her.

"That's Miss Carruthers, is it?" she thought.



"George has never seen her, I fancy, as he never mentioned her to me."

She had some time to wait for the train, and she went into the waiting-room. But she found it already occupied by some cheery, chatty women and children, returning from a holiday excursion. Their idle talk, their careless laughter, jarred with her mood; the children looked askance at her, and hushed their prattle; the women drew close together on the hard high leather bench which lined the room, a solemn mockery of a divan, and moderated their tones to a prim gentility. Harriet perceived the effect her presence produced, smiled slowly, and went out again upon the platform, which she paced from end to end, until the train came up, listening idly to the raised voices and renewed laughter which reached her through the open door.

When all the other passengers had taken their places, Harriet got into a carriage which had no other occupant, and so travelled up to London alone.

Routh was in the house when she reached the Tavistock, and was surprised at her speedy return. She told him how the intelligence she had heard on her arrival at Amherst had simplified her task of investigation. She made her narrative as brief as possible, she spoke in a cold measured voice which had become habitual to her, and which filled Routh with intense concealed irritation; and she never looked at him until she had concluded.

"I'll post the letter from the old fellow at once, then," said Routh; "it's only a couple of days late, and Dallas is too careless to notice that. When you write—you'd better not do it for a day or so, lest he might take it into his head to suspect you of a motive—you can tell him about our move."

Harriet acquiesced, and changed the subject to their new residence, a furnished house in Mayfair. She would go there on the morrow, she said, and arrange all their little property. Had everything been removed from South Molton-street?

Everything. Routh had seen to it himself, and had employed the boy who was always about there.

"Ay," said Harriet, dreamily, for she was thinking of the time, gone for ever, when she had been happy in the home she had left without one regret or hope. "What of him?"

"Nothing that I can make out," answered Routh, irritably. "But I hate the sort of half-recollection I seem to have of him. There's something in my mind connected with him, and I can't disentangle it."

Harriet looked up at her husband in some surprise, and turned very pale. She had a painful, an indelible remembrance connected with the first time she had seen Jim Swain. But Routh knew nothing of that; so she said nothing; she made no effort to aid his memory. She would avoid the torture when she could. Besides, she was utterly weary in body and in spirit.

Mr. Carruthers's letter reached George Dallas

not exactly duly, indeed, but after a delay which would have astonished and exasperated the writer, had he known it, to the last degree.

Stewart Routh and Harriet were very much superior to George Dallas in many mental attributes, and in particular in cunning; but they were incapable of understanding the young man on certain points. One of these points was his love for his mother, with its concomitants of remorse, repentance, and resolution. Not comprehending this mixed feeling, they made a serious miscalculation. The day or two which Harriet allowed to intervene before she wrote the letter which was to prolong George's absence, exactly sufficed to bring him to England.

### MY ORDERLY.

LET me first state that this Orderly of mine (No. 1) is a strong, stout, apparently unsentimental fellow. For the rest, an honest or a braver man never breathed. After some hardships and dangers encountered during the day, we were sitting round a large fire of sandalwood, a luxury you can't afford in England. Lying upon the ground at night, half starved by day, we can often enjoy a fire that our Queen might envy; for this wood, when burning, gives out a delicious odour.

And now My Orderly (No. 1) speaks.

"I had a mate in Californy. I won't tell his surname, sir. Mary bad characters were there, and for self-defence Harry and I kept much to ourselves. So I got to know him well, and to love him well too, for he was a man in every way. We were very fortunate, and made a pile, when one day Harry said to me:

"'Tom, old man, I'll go home and marry Peggy.'

"This brought me up standing, for I didn't see how I could part with him. I took the pipe out of my mouth and looked at him without speaking. I think he saw how it was, for he said immediately:

"'I'll bring her out, you know, old fellow, to whatever part of Australay you go to, as we're going to leave this.'

"'Not on my account, Harry, I says.'

"'No,' says he, 'but on my own account; on Peggy's account. Old man, I know you, and we don't part so easy.' Ah, he were so good-hearted, were Harry.

"Well, sir, the short and the long of it was, that we squared up. I saw him on board ship in no time—for it was a long engagement with Peggy—and I helped him to hurry away. This was, I think, in '48 or '49. I had told him I was bound for Sydney, and to direct letters to the post-office there. I went off to Sydney, had a try at the Bathurst diggings; came down after a long while and found a letter waiting for me from Harry. He wasn't an educated man, sir, but I declare I have read in grand books things not half so good as what I have read in his letters. He

told me of his meeting with Peggy. Shall I tell you of that, sir?"

"Of course, my man," I said, "tell me all you can of Harry."

"When Harry, on his return to Ireland, reached the town of Cavan, where Peggy was born, and where" (here My Orderly, No. 1, hesitated in an odd way), "and where," he went on, "I was born too. What did Harry do but put on his old digger's clothes that he had kept safe, makes inquiries whether the old curmudgeon, Peggy's father, was still alive, and all that, finds he is alive, and goes at dusk to the little cottage outside the town.

"They didn't know him at first, for the sun out here doesn't improve a man's complexion; but he soon made himself known, and Peggy fell into his arms in a dead faint. Her father was in an awful passion. He had always opposed the courtship most bitter.

"What," says he, 'are you come back, you vagabond, to steal about my place again by night as you did long ago, when you wanted my child to run away with you?'

"No, sir," says Harry, 'don't you see I am coming openly now? I haven't been able to forget Peggy, and she hasn't forgot me; so now, Mr. Hickey, will you give her to me?'

"Why, you madman," says Hickey, 'am I likely to give my child to a man in rags? What a hopeless profligate you must be not to be able to have done better in California than to come home in the clothes you're in.'

"Mr. Hickey," says Harry, 'I am willing to work hard for your daughter as an honest man, and we love each other and can't get over it. Will you give her to me or no?'

"Begone, you beggar," shouts the other, 'or I may forget myself in my own house.'

"All right, sir," says Harry; 'but you'll be sorry for this.'

"Two days after Peggy walked out quietly and was married to the man of her choice.

"Exactly one week after this, an old man was shown into a comfortable sitting-room in a neighbouring town. Harry and his wife had just dined. Peggy started up.

"Don't speak to me now, Peg," said the old man, who seemed to have a sore-throat. 'Go into another room for a minute or two.'

"She looked anxiously at her father and her husband for a second, was satisfied, and walked away.

"O Harry, O dear Harry," said the old man, 'on my knees I ask your forgiveness. I couldn't do it before my child, but do you know all you have done? My poor old wife and myself would have been driven out upon the highway only for you.'

"Father-in-law," says Harry, 'you know I would have done it for her sake alone; but I declare I think I would have done it even for the sake of showing to an old man that there's a better way of using money than hoarding it.'

"Harry had found that old Hickey had got into unlucky entanglements, that the screw

was about to be applied; so he went to the creditors, paid them, and sent receipts to Hickey for one thousand one hundred pounds.

"Some time after this," continued My Orderly (No. 1), "I heard of great diggings in Port Philip, and I wrote to Harry, telling him I intended to go there. Off I started, reached Bendigo, pitched my tent on Eagle Hawk Gully, and was getting any amount of gold. Why, sir, you couldn't believe it unless you was there."

"I was there," I said, "and at the earliest period, so go on."

"I had left directions," continued My Orderly (No. 1), "with a friend in Melbourne to forward my letters to the Bendigo post-office, and one day I got a letter telling me that Harry and Peggy and their little girl would be in Melbourne almost as soon as the letter would reach me.

"O Lord, how I did ride down to Melbourne! They hadn't arrived, though, and I had to wait for more than a week, but this gave me means to have everything comfortable for them when they should arrive. For what an awful place it was! Tender ladies continually landing, and from want of room in Melbourne compelled to go into tents; and their little children almost starving, and eaten alive with musquitoes and vermin—upon my soul, sir, I don't like to talk about it.

"They came at last and—well, well, I suppose I must confess it, but it was the only time that ever a woman told me not to—not to—feel a thing so much. You're not laughing at me, sir?" said My Orderly (No. 1), interrupting himself.

"No, I am not, indeed, Tom. Go on."

But I must inform the reader that here Tom showed great reluctance to go on; and before he *did* go on he gave utterance to sobs so exceedingly like sobs suppressed in a manly way, that I felt my own feelings considerably touched, because I knew his character so well.

"Their little girl, now between three and four years of age—what is the use of my trying to describe her? She was like an old woman in sense, but was as gay and light-hearted and full of childish sport as the queen of the fairies herself. Such talk as hers was! But then, you see, Peggy was a good and true woman, Harry was a good and true man, so she was kept from evil example. I assisted them in what they did for her."

Here there was another pause of some length.

"I will tell you a secret, sir, that I didn't intend to tell. Peggy and I had been reared together, and she was the only being I ever loved in the same way. It was me that brought Harry and her together. I saw too late they could only be happy with each other. I knew what a good fellow he was. It was me that put it in his head to go to Californy, and I went with him to help him make his fortune and marry her. For, you see, it was a hopeless case for me, and why shouldn't I do all I could for two such dear friends?"

"Well, when they all got out, Harry would have it that wife and child must go with him and me to Bendigo. I wished them to be left in some respectable lodging-house, but Harry was obstinate.

"It's no use talking, Tom," says he; "I will not leave them in this rowdy place. Things are bad, indeed, as you say, at Eagle Hawk, but I'll have a first-rate marquee for them, and I'll pitch it always near where we work; so they'll be all right."

"We went up to Bendigo in a spring waggon, well roofed, and arrived in safety. The marquee was pitched quite close to our 'claims,' and in a short time Peggy was as happy as possible. Her life not laborious, as you may guess, sir; for we even got washing done for her, which is much to say in the case of a digger's wife.

"I really do think that the happiest days I ever spent in my life were the days I spent there, working hard with Harry for a few hours, and spending most of my evenings with Peggy, the little girl, and Harry. My God! what a queer power some children have over a man! I'll give you an instance.

"One evening little Lizzy was sitting on my knee very silent; all at once she says:

"Do oo ever say oor prayers?"

"Now this took me quite aback, for I had promised my mother, many years before, never to neglect *this*. I didn't know well what to answer, so I said:

"Why do you ask me that, Liz?" And her answer was stranger:

"Because I like oo, Tom, and because I want God to like oo. God won't like oo if oo don't say oor prayers."

"And then the little thing slid down from my knee, knelt on the ground, and said:

"Pray God make Tom good; pray God like Tom; pray God make Tom say his prayers."

There was a tremendous pause after this. My Orderly seemed to have swallowed one of those confounded mosquitoes, and was trying hard for a long time to get it up. I made a remark to encourage him, and he went on.

"We had to shift our quarters, at last, from want of water, so we went to another gully at some distance, where there was much deep sinking. We sunk several holes, and did pretty well for some time.

"When here, I met a man that I felt at once a deadly hatred to. It's not my nature, and it was a very strange thing. I met him at a grog-shop; for I wasn't a saint, and used to take my glass now and then. This fellow was a tall, lanky, black-browed fellow, with a scowl—well, when he tried to laugh, why, of the two, I preferred the scowl.

"He seemed to dislike every human being except little Lizzie, but he really acted as though he liked her. Every time he passed our camp and saw her, he would try to make her take a small nugget, or a few raisins, or currants, or walnuts. The child always refused his gifts. She shuddered when he spoke to her, and used to run up to Harry or me for protection.

"Harry shared with me this feeling of hatred, for it was nothing else; and when persons have such feelings as these it does not take much to make a quarrel; so a quarrel did take place between Harry and this man Cornish, and Harry gave him an awful hammering. As Cornish was leaving the place, he held up his finger in a threatening way to Harry, and gave him such a devilish look out of his battered eyes as I shall never forget to my dying day. Harry only laughed at him, and asked him if he wanted any more? But I well remembered a similar gesture that I read of in Sir Walter Scott's tale of the 'Two Drovers,' and I felt very uneasy.

"At length the gully began to thin. Men left their claims, and no others came in their place. Our hole was cleared out, and there was nothing for it but to go 'prospecting.'

"Harry and I started one morning, intending to be back by nightfall. Little Lizzy clung to me and besought me 'not to tay long.' But on our way back we got bewildered in a dense scrub, and it was far in the night before we got clear of it.

"Don't believe them, sir, that laugh at forebodings of evil. I was as sure there was something wrong as I was of my existence. Yes, and there *was* something wrong. When we got back, Peggy was surrounded by the few women of the place, quite insensible. Harry turned sick, and was going to fall. He could only say to me as I held him up, 'Ask, ask.'

"What is all this, Mrs. Murphy?" I asked.

"Och, Tom dear, poor little Lizzy. The Lord be good to me;" and she sobbed in genuine sorrow.

"I was trembling all over, and felt very giddy, but I managed to gasp out:

"Will no one here, in God's name, tell us what has happened?"

"She's lost, Tom. Every one's hunting for her everywhere. She's lost since sundown."

"Harry rose up as cool as a man could be, assisted the women to restore his wife to her senses, and then, after fearful explosions of grief, we learned that Peggy had gone down to the creek for water, leaving Lizzie asleep in the marquee. The creek was some distance off, and as she did not feel well, she sat down many times to rest. When she got back, Lizzy was gone."

Here My Orderly (No. 1) appeared to have swallowed about a dozen mosquitoes, and somehow my Other Orderlies began to complain what an infernal nuisance "them beasts of horse mosquitoes were."

"Cheer up, my girl," says Harry; "all's not lost that's in danger. Tom and I must go and see about this?"

"We went outside, and, before we mounted our horses, Tom came up to me and said:

"Let me feel your hand, Tom. Right, you are all there, I see. I want to say one word to you, Tom. I am a very wicked man."

"Are you a lunatic, Harry?" says I. "Has this turned your brain after all?"

"No, Tom," he said, "I am a villain in allowing certain thoughts to cross my mind."

"What do you mean?" I said.

"This," says he, "I believe Lizzy has been taken away, and is perhaps murdered."

"Be a man, Harry," I answers. "Do you suspect any one?"

"He did not answer, but mounted his horse, and we rode away. That long night through we rode about 'cooeing,' and many a narrow escape we had from tumbling down the deep holes. We met others, too, as busy as we were, on the same errand. But we all returned without success."

"That evening, as we sat in the marquee taking some refreshment, I said to Harry:

"You recollect what you said to me last night?"

"Says he, 'And are you not of my mind?'"

"Listen to me, Tom," I said. "Jimmy is now at Rooke's station, about thirty miles off. He's the best tracker in the colonies. Bring him into the marquee, and whoever took the child away, Jimmy will track better than a blood-hound."

"No good, Tom," says he. "Look at the crowds of people that have been here since; every track of last night is gone."

"Never mind," I answers. "Jimmy must be got. It's our *only* chance."

"Harry rode over, and got the black fellow. He could speak English very well, and understood in an instant what he had to do. It was very curious to see how he commenced his work. He spent at least an hour about the bunk that Lizzy had been sleeping on. Then he got up and led the way slowly towards a scrub not more than two hundred yards off. We entered it; he went on until he came to a spot where he stopped, as though uncertain. After some time, he went out of the scrub at right angles to our road into it, and led the way right to a deep-sunk hole that had been deserted some weeks before."

"I have often thought that Harry and I were in a kind of stupor all this time (although we saw and noted everything that was done), for it seems to me now that only a moment passed until I saw men letting the black fellow down by a rope, saw him come up again with something that had golden hair hanging on his arm, heard my poor Harry utter the most awful scream of mortal agony that ever rang through my ears, and after that I didn't hear any more." (Here the mosquitoes, confound them, were very hard at work.)

"Well, sir, there was an inquest—Wilful murder against some person or persons unknown."

"The question was, who was the murderer? Harry and I had no doubt about it, and several were of our opinion. The suspected man had left the gully, it appeared, early on the day of the murder, although one woman said she saw him coming back long after the others had seen him go. However, there was no shadow of law-evidence against him, and we could do nothing. Rewards were offered, detectives sent up—all to

no purpose. Peggy did not recover her senses for a long time, and she never was told the worst part of the case. Harry seemed to live only for the purpose of discovering his child's destroyer. We took Peggy down to the sea-coast, got her the best medical advice, and, after we saw that she was mending, we determined to leave her with the kind, good people we lodged with, and to go to visit new diggings we had just heard of."

"And now, sir, I am going to tell you one of them things you read about in novels; but I often say that novels is foolish things compared with rale life. The evening before we were to start, Peggy, with her poor weak hands, was rummaging among her packages for some things to give to Harry for his journey. Suddenly she began to cry and sob so bitterly that Harry ran over to her, and says:

"What is the matter with you, my poor darling?"

"But Harry began to sob himself, for his wife had just taken out by mistake the little frock that the blessed child had been murdered in. He threw it down on the table to support his wife, and I heard something like metal strike the candlestick. What made me pay attention to it I cannot tell, but there, half hid by the little waist-belt, was something round and shining."

"Harry," says I, "come here for a moment. Do you recognise this?"

"Of course he did; so did I. It was the top of Cornish's tobacco-pipe, of a style that no one could ever fail to notice."

"Tom," says Harry, as white as a sheet, "where did you get this?"

"It must have got entangled in the waist-belt," I said, in a whisper, "when he was carrying her, and got hidden between the belt and the frock. You, throwing it down made it come half out."

"What will you do with it?" I said again. "Hand it to the police, of course?"

"No fear," Harry answers. "The lawyers would be safe to get him off. They would make it out that the child found it, or that the guilty party put it there on purpose to divert attention from him, and many other things of the kind. No, Tom; I know two policemen who will find him." He looked very hard into my face as he said this.

"I think I know them, too," I said. "When will they set out?"

"To-morrow morning, Tom, and no mistake."

"The next morning the two policemen set out. One of them was called—O yes, he was called Griffin, and the other—call him Hobbs if you like. It did not take such experienced bush-constables long to find out that Cornish was living, under another name, on the station of a Mr. Courtenay, as stockman. They steered in that direction, and in a day or two reached the station."

"They asked about a stockman called Walsh. He had left that very day. Would Mr.



Courtenay be kind enough to describe him? With pleasure; a tall, lank man, with large black eyebrows, and bad expression of face. He had taken the road towards Bendigo.

"Towards Bendigo! The two constables looked at each other, and a curious look was exchanged between them. They put their horses to their mettle that day, but they did not overtake their man; still they heard on the way that he was ahead. They tied their weary horses up that night and pulled up grass for them, not to lose time in the morning. At a very early hour they were on the road again, and about ten o'clock they saw a traveller before them, and they were sure he was their man. They slackened their speed that they might overtake him gradually, and at a convenient spot. They managed it so well, that at the same moment one was on each side of him on a lonely part of the road. He looked into the faces of both, and saw his fate there. He was about to make a desperate rush for it, when Griffin seized his bridle, and Hobbs clapped a revolver to his head.

"Come quietly with us at once, or you are a dead man."

"The wretch let his hands drop helplessly down while the constables led him off the road into the bush. When there, Griffin says to him:

"Do you know this?" holding up the top of the pipe. The other muttered something.

"This was found, do you hear, in the frock of the child you murdered, and worse than murdered. Move on, and the first sound or movement you make, you are a corpse."

"They went on. They were about twenty miles from Bendigo, but they kept quite in the bush, to avoid observation and make a short cut. They had reached the place of our old encampment long before nightfall, but they stayed in the scrub until long after the sun went down. They kept their prisoner sitting on the ground in front of them. Several times he had tried to ask them questions, but Griffin, in a terrible voice, told him to be silent.

"As soon as it became deep dusk, Griffin got up, put a large piece of wood in their prisoner's mouth, and secured it by binding his own handkerchief over his mouth and round his head. He then bound his arms and hands very tightly with two saddle-straps, and led him along, pistol in hand. The fatal hole was soon found. The wretch made one convulsive spring backwards, and the noises that he made in attempting to scream were unearthly. But there was no escape. Griffin, with superhuman force, plunged him into the hole, and they listened with grim pleasure to the splash he made in the water at the bottom."

"Gracious Heavens!" I exclaimed; "you don't mean to tell me that you—that they deliberately murdered a man in that way?"

"I only tell you what occurred, sir," replied My Orderly (No. 1); "but I don't call it murder. They threw Cornish's (alias Walsh) saddle and bridle into the hole, and turned his horse loose. You may depend upon it, sir, there are few places that could make such revelations, if

they could speak, as the deep old holes of Bendigo."

"My good friend," I began, "I am afraid that—" But just then the loud and wild corrobberie of black fellows was heard about two hundred yards off.

"Put fresh caps on your revolvers, men; they *may* come down upon us. Any one who is awake and hears them coming will rouse the others."

And so, with a brief prayer to Heaven for those who were far distant, and for protection throughout the night, I wrapped myself in my blanket and lay down beside my boy-son (whom I am training to this life of adventure); nor was it long before the wild corrobberie chant, droning in my drowsy ear, grew fainter still, and then was lost.

#### THE VIGIL.

THE moon has risen solemnly  
O'er yonder distant height,  
No murky clouds have crossed her path,  
Dimming her silver light.  
Pure, peaceful, holy, gentle, calm,  
She guards the earth to-night.

Silent and still the cedars spread  
Their branches rough and torn,  
And dark and far their shadows fling  
Across the shaven lawn,  
Where, tended by a mother's love,  
There rests a sleeping fawn.

Before another sun has set,  
Beneath the cloister's shade,  
For ever will the oath be sworn,  
The fatal word be said,  
And by the altar's holy shrine  
The sacred promise made.

No more upon these lips of mine  
Shall lover's kiss be pressed:  
No more held fast within his arms  
And folded to his breast,  
Shall my heart find a hiding-place  
To nestle down and rest.

No one more dear than all beside  
To be my stay through life;  
No strong firm arm and steady hand  
To help me in the strife;  
No earnest looks of trust and love,  
No tender name of wife!

And I must check the thought as sin,  
Which bade my heart rejoice  
Whene'er I heard, like some sweet chord,  
The music of his voice,  
And knew that he was near me then,  
My own, my love, my choice!

No tiny hands will stroke my cheek,  
And round my neck entwine,  
Nor baby smiles, nor baby lips,  
Meet tenderly with mine,  
And be beyond expression dear,  
Because a child of thine!

They tell me that rich gifts will come  
Upon me from above,  
When through the cloister, dim and still,  
With quiet steps I move,  
If I will strive to check and kill  
All thought of earthly love.

They tell me that the Highest One  
 Will fill me with His grace,  
 And cause about my path to shine  
 The brightness of His face,  
 And give me, though so stained with sin,  
 In Heaven a dwelling-place.  
 But did He mean that human hearts  
 Should feel such bitter pain,  
 That human love should spring and grow,  
 And yet be all in vain;  
 Or worse, by hard and cruel blow,  
 Be smitten down and slain?  
 Hush! sinful thoughts and murmuring words!  
 Peace! restless soul, be still!  
 Some wise and holy end is wrought  
 From every grief and ill,  
 And sorrow is an Angel sent  
 To God's blessed will.

### OLD STORIES RE-TOLD.

#### THE TRIAL AND EXECUTION OF FAUNTLEROY.

IN one point, a cynic once said, we in these later days have materially gone back in civilisation: we now only transport bankers who turn thieves. Formerly we used to hang them.

Any day towards the close of the London season of 1824, persons turning into Berners-street out of the din and jostle of Oxford-street, would have seen on the door of Number Six an oblong brass plate, and engraved upon it, in free cursive letters,

MARSH, STACEY, FAUNTLEROY, AND GRAHAM,  
 names great on 'Change, potent in the Bank parlour, and influential in Lombard-street.

A rapid glance through the thin veil of a dark wire blind, bordered with white, would have shown well-dressed, taciturn young men busy at ledgers, ruffling silvery bundles of bank-notes, or shovelling sovereigns in golden showers from drawer to counter, from counter to drawer. Had a glass door at the back of the room at that moment opened, it might have disclosed a thin-faced, elderly man, with neat powdered hair, and a dress of black, cut in the most perfect—but quiet—fashion. It might have been that the very moment the door opened, that grave intensely respectable and appreciated person, that delight of society, had just, with a sigh, completed the writing of a certain memorable document, and enclosed it in a tin box, sighing as he turned the key quickly and suspiciously in the lock: then carefully depositing it in a desk, locked the desk with another key which hung among his costly bunch of watch-seals.

Persons living in that street, struggling in small businesses and just turning their money, must have often looked up at the sumptuous apartments on the first floor at Number Six, and have envied that pale grave man, whose anxious face they could sometimes see looking through the windows. Hackney-coachmen on the rank in Berners-street, as they screwed down the tobacco in their oily pipes, and discussed the world over the tops of their coaches, must have often pointed with the butt-end of

their whips surreptitiously to the glittering windows at Number Six, when Mr. Fauntle-roy was conspicuously "at home." "Rich as Creases!" may have been said, more than once, on such occasions.

Punctual as the Horse Guards' clock, Mr. Fauntle-roy came in from his Brighton villa, turned the corner from Regent-circus, and solemnly pushed open the bank doors, hushing at once all chatter of clerks, their snatches of songs, and their theatrical and sporting reminiscences.

To have impugned that house upon 'Change would have been to incur the penalty of being pumped on, and afterwards of being beaten dry with a horse-whip; an action for libel, with swinging damages, would have then, without doubt, taken all the remainder of your breath out of you, and embittered the rest of your life with the disgrace of bankruptcy. The British Constitution was not more stable than Fauntle-roy's house; Magna Charta not more venerated.

Yet, remarkable to state, on the afternoon of that bright and pleasant autumn day—September 10th—Samuel Plank, a hard-faced police-officer from Marlborough-street, suddenly entered the neat bank parlour, laid his large brawny hands on Mr. Fauntle-roy's shoulder, and apprehended him, on a charge of forging powers of attorney, by which he had disposed of three hundred and sixty thousand pounds' worth of other people's Bank of England stock. The old clerks almost fainted; the young clerks derided the charge in a tremulous way; the partners sympathised; stray persons in the bank on business were horrified, and almost thought the end of the world had come. On those thin, white, perhaps rather mischievous hands the grim bright steel handcuffs, as bracelets, must have looked sadly unfitting. It was remarkable, however, that considering the worthy and most respectable banker's perfect and palpable innocence, Mr. Fauntle-roy seemed to expect the unpleasant visit, and locked the desk at which he sat with considerable care just as the police-officer entered the sacred room. The key was taken from the banker's watch-chain at the Marlborough-street office, and was found to lead to most important discoveries, affecting, indeed, half the commercial interest of London.

A palsy of horror and fear seized the tenants of bank parlours the next morning, when, throwing carelessly open the wet and flowing sheet of the Times, their eyes fell on a paragraph in large type, headed in thrilling capitals:

"Arrest of Mr. FAUNTLEROY, the eminent banker, on a charge of FORGERY!!!"

What pallor must have fallen on respectable grave faces! How many gold spectacles must have been taken off as if to get more air! What stimulants of snuff must have been inhaled! How many grey heads must have met with ominous looks over ledgers!

In the City such catastrophes as this produce a horrible feeling of alarm, suspicion, and dis-

trust. Every bank seems a whited sepulchre. It is as if Lombard-street pavement had suddenly given way, like ice, and a great volcano of uncontrollable fire had come spouting up ten times as high as the Monument. Such convulsions in commerce are what great disappointments are in life; they make men cynics in a moment; they uproot hope, and destroy our trust in human nature. If Fides be false, if Achatas is dishonest, who, we think, can be honest, who can be true? No hypocrite is ever exposed without making half a dozen men irreligious for life. No banker is dishonest without turning half a dozen commercial men into misanthropes, who henceforward raise their rate of interest and refuse loans even to their own mothers.

Before Mr. Fauntleroy's trial took place, endless ledgers had been conned, bank-books totted up, tin boxes ransacked, and stupendous discoveries made. The court was full of bankers, merchants, literary men, and west-end men, who had either been robbed by Fauntleroy, or had shared his hospitality at his pleasant dinner-parties. The prisoner, with his powdered hair and dress immaculate as ever, stood pale, nervous, and humble at the bar. Fauntleroy had really embezzled about four hundred thousand pounds, but the Bank of England prosecuted for only one hundred and seventy thousand pounds which he had obtained by forged powers of attorney in the years 1814, 1815.

The grand jury of the city of London found true bills against Mr. Fauntleroy on several charges of forgery, and the trial was appointed to take place on October 30, 1824. The sheriffs determined to obviate the inconveniences of a crowded court by preventing any persons entering it as mere spectators who were not provided with tickets signed by themselves. Nevertheless, the galleries, which were claimed as private property under the control of particular officers of the corporation, were farmed out with great zeal at a guinea a seat.

Long before eight o'clock a throng began to assemble at the Old Bailey doors, and a tremendous crush was expected; but, as often happens in these cases, so many people feared the crowd, that, after all, no very great crowd came. The price of the gallery seats had deterred the public, and there were not more than twenty persons in them.

Mr. ex-Sheriff Parkins made himself rather conspicuous by his remarkable eagerness for the commencement of the trial, and his great apprehension lest some unforeseen circumstance should produce delay.

At ten o'clock, Mr. Justice Park and Mr. Baron Garrow entered the court, accompanied by the Lord Mayor. The prisoner was dressed in a full suit of black, and his grey hair was, as usual, powdered. His previous firmness seemed to desert him now when placed at the bar. His step was tremulous, his face pale and thinner than on his first examination at Marlborough-street. He never raised his head, even for a

moment, but placed his hands for support on the front of the dock, and stood in the most dejected way while the Deputy-Clerk of the Arraignment repeated the seven different indictments for forgery. The reading of these occupied twenty minutes.

The first indictment charged Henry Fauntleroy (no respect now to the great rich man) with forging a deed with intent to defraud Frances Young of five thousand pounds stock, and also with forging a power of attorney with intent to defraud the Bank of England.

The Attorney-General then, gathering up his heap of notes, and tossing his silk gown higher over his shoulders, set to work to fit the noose securely and legally round the neck of the unhappy banker. Fauntleroy's father, he stated, had been a partner in the bank from its very first establishment, and continued so till his death in 1807, at which period the prisoner became a partner, and soon rose to be the most active and working member of the firm. In 1815, Frances Young, of Chichester, a customer of the house, lodged in the hands of the firm a power of attorney to receive the dividends on five thousand four hundred and fifty pounds Three per Cent Consols. These dividends were regularly received; but soon afterwards another power of attorney was presented to the bank, authorising the prisoner to sell that stock, and he sold it. It was afterwards found that he had forged the name of Frances Young, and the names of the two attesting witnesses. Since the discovery, a paper of singular importance had been found proving this. (What this paper was it will be better for us to state further on.)

James Tyson, the first witness called, said: I have been clerk in the bank ever since 1807, the very year the prisoner was taken into the house. In 1815, the partners were Sir James Tibbald, Bart., William Marsh, Henry Fauntleroy, George Edward Graham, and Josias Henry Stacey. Sir James died in 1819 or 1820, and Mr. Fauntleroy became then the active partner. The name of James Tyson attached to the instrument produced is not in my handwriting. I swear that I did not write it. I never saw Miss Frances Young sign a deed. I never, indeed, saw her in my life till I saw her at the office at Marlborough-street, after Mr. Fauntleroy's apprehension. The description of the witnesses, "clerks to Messrs. Marsh, Tibbald, and Co., bankers, Berners-street, is, I think, in Mr. Fauntleroy's writing. I have been in the habit of seeing him write weekly, daily, hourly. Having such knowledge of his handwriting, I say that I have no doubt that the words of the description are in his writing."

John Browning, junior, examined by Mr. Law, deposed: I have been for twenty-four years a clerk in the Three per Cent Consols Office. I was subsidiary witness to the power of attorney produced. I saw Mr. Fauntleroy attach this signature in the sixth division of our office. I have with me here, the bank ledger, which shows that, on the day named, Miss Frances Young

had five thousand four hundred and fifty pounds Three per Cent Consolidated Annuities standing in her name. The transfer-book I here produce shows that on June 1, 1815, five thousand pounds were transferred from the name of Miss F. Young to that of William Flower, of the Stock Exchange. The signature subscribed to that transfer, "R. Fauntleroy, attorney," was written by Mr. Fauntleroy in my presence. I know the prisoner's handwriting.

Mr. Robert Best, secretary to the Bank of England, examined by Mr. Serjeant Bosanquet: I have with me the minute-book of the directors. There is a minute, dated 21st of October, 1824: "Ordered that Three per Cent Consols should be purchased and entered in the name of Miss Frances Young." There was a preamble—

Mr. Gurney, the prisoner's counsel, struggling against the stream, objected to the preamble being read. Witness was not present when the resolution was agreed to. It really was not evidence.

Mr. Justice Park reserved the question, but said that the order was contained in the books of the Bank of England, and those books had always been received as evidence ever since he had been in the profession.

Mr. Best continued: The original minute was written by the Governor of the Bank, who handed it to the secretary to read, and to be confirmed by the Court of Directors, after which it was entered in the minute-book.

Mr. Benjamin Tite, stockbroker to the Bank of England, then proved the purchase of five thousand pounds consols, and the transfer of the sum to the name of Miss F. Young. (This was the sum to replace the money fraudulently taken by Fauntleroy.)

The jury not understanding the tendency of all this evidence, Mr. Justice Park, in his bland way, explained that it was necessary to make Miss Young a competent witness, and that it was required to prove that she had no interest either in invalidating or affirming the genuineness of the power of attorney. The Bank had since replaced the stock, and released her from all claims.

Mr. Gurney objected to Miss Frances Young being called. She had not received her dividends since 1805. The proving the forgery entitled her to dividends of considerable value; she was, therefore, an interested and incompetent witness.

The Attorney-General removed this objection by proving Miss Young's signature to a deed releasing the Bank of England from all claims touching the dividends.

Miss Young proved that her signature to the power was a forgery. "I never authorised the prisoner, nor any other person, to sell out five thousand pounds stock for me. I was never in London either in May or June in 1815. I was all that time in Chichester."

James Tyson recalled: Mr. Marsh generally received the bulk of the dividends at the Bank, as he was the senior partner of the firm. Before the dividends are received, it is usual for

bankers to make out a list of the sums they have to receive for their customers. That list was generally made out in our house by Mr. Fauntleroy. (A list was here put into the hands of the witness.) That is a list of the dividends to be received upon consols in July, 1824. The endorsement upon it, "Three per Cent Consols, July, 1824, Marsh, Stacey, and Co.," is in the handwriting of the prisoner. The paper contains a long list of names, and of sums opposite to them. The list is alphabetical. The first column is in red. The red figures are made by the bank clerks. The two other columns, the one of the names and the other of sums, are in the handwriting of Mr. Fauntleroy. I see the name of Frances Young in the list. Five hundred and fifty pounds is placed opposite her name as the sum upon which the dividends are to be received. When the dividend warrants had been received by Mr. Marsh at the Bank of England, he brought them home and gave them to Mr. Fauntleroy. Mr. Fauntleroy made out an account of part of the sums so received. The rest were made out by the clerk. I have the cash-book of July, 1824, with me, and I see the following entry among those made by the prisoner: "Miss Frances Young, 5550*l*. = 83-5. (The witness then produced various ledgers belonging to the house of Marsh and Co., and read entries in them, from which it appeared that from July, 1823, the dividends credited to Miss F. Young were on five thousand five hundred and fifty pounds, and that previously to that time they were on five thousand four hundred and fifty pounds. The entries in the day-book were traced back to 1815, and were invariably found to be in the prisoner's handwriting. The same was the case in the cash-books.) On the 1st June the sum of two thousand nine hundred and fifty-three pounds two shillings and sixpence is entered to the credit of H. F. That entry is in the handwriting of Watson, one of the clerks. I have turned to the private ledger of the different partners, and have looked to the dates of June 1st and June 6th. There is the following entry in one line:—"June 6th, Ryan, 40*l*.; June 1st, cash 2953*l*. 2*s*. 6*d*. : 2993*l*. 2*s*. 6*d*." The words, "June 6th, Ryan, 40*l*," are in the handwriting of Mr. Graham. The remainder is in the handwriting of the prisoner at the bar. It stands short upon the line, and there appears to have been an erasure there. The whole of the line stands to the credit of "H. F."

Cross-examined by Mr. Gurney: The whole of the sums placed there to the credit of the prisoner amount to thirty thousand pounds. I do not know whether those sums did or did not find their way into the funds of the house. That rests with the partners themselves. I do not know that they were drawn out on Mr. Fauntleroy's own private account. Messrs. Martin and Co. were our City bankers, and often received money on our account, and paid it over to us. It is impossible for me to say whether the money about which I am questioned was or was not paid into the banking-



house. Mr. Stacey could answer that question; a clerk cannot. It was usual to make entries in the books for large sums to the initials of the partners. They were placed sometimes to stock transactions, and sometimes to exchequer transactions.

Mr. Plank, a police-officer, deposed to finding two boxes at Mr. Fauntleroy's, one of them had the prisoner's name upon it. Both were opened with the keys found in Mr. Fauntleroy's desk. They were taken away in a coach by Mr. Freshfield, the solicitor to the Bank.

Mr. Freshfield proved that in the box with the name he found principally deeds and probates of wills, and in that with no name (therefore more private) a variety of memoranda, diaries, the sale note of Miss F. Young's stock, and also the extraordinary document already referred to by the Attorney-General.

James Tyson, again recalled, proved the fatal document to be in the prisoner's handwriting. When there was a sale of stock effected for a customer of the house, it was usual to file the sold note, and one of the partners then entered it in a book kept for the purpose.

James Kirby, another clerk of Fauntleroy's house, deposed that no such entry had been made as was usual in the fair course of business.

Crushing as this evidence was, the document so often referred to from the tin box had *death* written all over it. It was sufficient to have hung twenty bankers.

It was, in fact, a confession, in the prisoner's own handwriting, and rendered further evidence almost unnecessary. It contained the following items: De la Place, eleven thousand one hundred and fifty pounds Three per Cent Consols; E. W. Young, five thousand pounds Consols; General Young, six thousand pounds Consols; Frances Young, five thousand pounds Consols; H. Kelley, six thousand pounds Consols; Lady Nelson, eleven thousand nine hundred and ninety-five pounds Consols; Earl of Ossory, seven thousand pounds Four per Cents; W. Bowen, nine thousand four hundred pounds Four per Cents; Parkins, four thousand pounds Consols. Sums were also placed to the names of Mrs. Pelham, Lady Aboyne, W. R. and H. Fauntleroy, and Elizabeth Fauntleroy. The Attorney-General observed that the sum total, one hundred and twenty thousand pounds, appeared at the foot of this list in the prisoner's handwriting. The statement was followed by this declaration: "In order to keep up the credit of our house, I have forged powers of attorney for the above sums and parties, and sold out to the amount here stated, and without the knowledge of my partners. I kept up the payment of the dividends, but made no entries of such payments in our books. *The Bank began first to refuse to discount our acceptances, and to destroy the credit of our house; the Bank shall smart for it.*"

The prisoner, on being asked what he had to say in his defence, read a paper stating that, on his joining the firm in 1807, he found the concern deeply involved in consequence of

building speculations. The house remained in embarrassment until 1810, and then experienced an overwhelming loss from the failure of Brickwood and Co., for which concern it had accepted and discounted bills to the amount of one hundred and seventy thousand pounds. In 1814, 1815, 1816, the firm was called upon, in consequence of speculations in building, to produce one hundred thousand pounds. In 1819 the most responsible of the partners died, and the embarrassments of the house were again increased by being called upon to refund his capital. During all this time the house was without resources, except those for which he was now responsible. He had received no relief from his partners. He kept two establishments on a very moderate scale. *He had never embezzled one shilling.*

Having finished reading the paper, Fauntleroy sat down and wept with much agitation.

Never had there been such witnesses to character. Sir Charles Forbes and fifteen other witnesses, who had known Mr. Fauntleroy for from ten to twenty years each, attested their high opinion of the prisoner's honour, integrity, and goodness of disposition. They were all his sincere friends, and were all in the same tune. No doubt of his honour and integrity had ever crossed their minds. They all revealed the serene mountain peak of respectability from which the banker had fallen headlong. "Kind, honourable," said one. "Just, fair, and kind-hearted," cried another. "A most benevolent man, with a stainless character for integrity," declared a third.

There is no moment in a trial which involves death, so solemn as the moment when the jury rise and retire to consider their verdict. Even the barristers' worn faces glow with excitement. The judge has an air of grave abstraction, and seems pondering over the few still unsolvable mysteries of the case. A cold dew has broken out on the forehead of the prisoner, and he clutches at the dock as if that hold only retained him in life. In that short interval of time there is crowded upon him the agony of years. The horrors of death have already come. There is a dead silence. Then a distant sound of feet; it grows nearer, the crowd surge back. The jury is returning. They enter flushed and grave. The judge gives them one searching look, and the foreman rises to answer the solemn question to be asked him. The prisoner's whole soul is absorbed in the answer. In Fauntleroy's case the jury retired for twenty minutes. The prisoner seemed deeply agitated during their absence, and rose up when the mob poured in announcing their return.

The verdict was, "Guilty of uttering the forged instrument knowing it to be forged."

Judge Park, after bending down and exchanging a few remarks with the counsel in a low voice, suddenly, and with extreme abruptness, raised his head and exclaimed:

"Henry Fauntleroy!"

The prisoner started, and rose as if in expectation that sentence was about to be pro-

nounced on him. The learned judge proceeded: "Henry Fauntleroy, the Attorney-General does not feel it necessary, in the discharge of his duty, to proceed further with the other indictments which have been preferred against you. It is no part of my painful duty to pronounce the awful sentence of the law, which will follow the verdict which has just been recorded. That unpleasant task will devolve on the learned Recorder at the termination of the sessions; but it is a part of my duty as a Christian magistrate to implore you now that you bethink yourself seriously of your latter end." A convulsive sob from the wretched prisoner was audible through the court. When the judge had concluded, Fauntleroy was quite overpowered, being barely able to raise his hands as if in the attitude of prayer, which was the only answer he was capable of making. He was then removed from the bar, supported on the arms of Mr. Wontner and one of his friends, to the prison.

There remains a certain mystery still shrouding the great Fauntleroy swindle. It is impossible to conjecture for what purpose the dishonest banker preserved in a private box so careful and suicidal a statement of his own misdoings. It might have been that he was contemplating immediate flight even at the very moment of his arrest, and wished to leave behind him a clear and logical schedule that might explain matters to, and absolve, his partners. It might be that Fauntleroy (with that strange confusion of feeling and aberration of judgment that raises some thieves almost to the dignity of monomaniacs) wished to leave ample and clear testimony of the revenge his mistaken honour had taken on the Bank of England for having refused credit to his firm.

Our own hypothesis is, however, a harsher one. It is a kindly trait in human nature, a proof of its indelible goodness (and also its inexhaustible gullibility, sneers the cynic), that people are generally disposed to believe the last confessions of great criminals. The man whose blackened and corrupted soul has planned the most treacherous and cruel crimes is usually supposed to be so cleansed and purified by the sight of twelve British jurymen and a wig of flowing horsehair, that his declarations are heard with all the confidence with which we listen to the lisps of innocence and infancy. No motive is suspected, no mental distortion allowed for. We yield ourselves ready believers to a dark tissue of subtle and ingenious falsehoods invented by the man who is, as he knows, hotly hunted by the hangman, and on the very brink of the false floor from which the well-greased bolt is already receding.

The man who has once plunged into the slough of crime has long lived on lies. They have become the very breath of his life, his food, his implements, the scaffolding with which he builds, the pitfall he sets for his victims, his mask, his ambush, and his armour; they have grown dear to him as his cruel knife and his still smoking pistol. It is not a few hours in a dark stone cell; it is not even twelve jurymen and an

entangled wig that will scare him from their use. He has become a great devilish destructive principle at war with the principles of truth and goodness, and lies are but the twinings and doublings that he makes in his desperate and panting struggle to escape the slip knot. He has petrified himself into an incarnate lie. As for truth, it chokes him, and is snatched from him before he can utter it.

We believe that Fauntleroy gambled, and lived at Brighton in foolish splendour, under the shadow of the fantastic palace of George the Fourth. The great capitalist, the honourable benevolent kind-hearted banker, had not moral courage enough to face the world, in honest brave poverty. He went on living as he had lived. He silently stole thousands after thousands, buoyed up by the secret excuse of an absurd and illogical revenge, until he got deeper and deeper in the slimy morass of fraud. Theft had to back up theft. He could not stop himself. He must go on now. Restitution became hopeless.

In the glitter of a thousand wax-lights, in his soft-lined carriage on the Steyne, in the Park, in Bond-street, the grave man in black moved and passed, the model of bankers, the very rose of Lombard-street. When he got alone and at night, he became the agonised, timid, crushed, miserable, broken-hearted man, trembling at every door that opened, shuddering at every whisper on the stairs, startled at each jarring window, palsied every morning he opened the paper and read another bank failure, another scene on the Newgate scaffold, — every time the fatal dividend-day came round, lest his victims, from a moment's delay, should scent out the long series of cruel and treacherous theft. Riches, show, splendour, Brighton villas, money-bags, diamonds, are indeed pitiful and contemptible when we look at nine years passed in this torture.

The gay and pleasant time had passed; the days of splendour, ostentation, arrogance, and luxury in the club-rooms or the Steyne, in the Berners-street parlour, at the great dinner-parties (mentioned by Hazlitt), had gone by. Those few simple words, written in a bold clear business-like hand, had been as the sowing of dragons' teeth; they had evoked police-officers, jurymen, judges, and last of all the hangman. The slow dawning day of terrible retribution had at last come. The honourable and benevolent banker was now to stand forth over Newgate door, before a hundred thousand cruel, eager, brutal, pitiless faces, looming white through the fog of a dull, dismal, cold, wet November morning.

Hardly since the Perreaus, the wine-merchants, who were hung in 1776, or since Dr. Dodd, the popular preacher, paid the penalty at Tyburn, for forgery, in 1777, had the contemplated execution of a gentleman moved more pity, or excited such deep and universal interest. One does not see a great London banker hung every day. The sight drew together half the City. At daybreak, a vast crowd began to roll on towards the great gloomy blind stone house on the hill, to scan its hard repulsive

profile against the unpropitious and sunless sky, and to gape up at the coffin-like door, emblazoned with the murderer's escutcheon of iron fetters. The sordid and greasy thousands not only extended in a close-packed mass from Ludgate-hill to the entrance of the then loathsome and penned-up Smithfield, but surged away all down Skinner-street and along Newgate-street, around that black mountain range of stone which is called Saint Paul's, far indeed beyond any point where any line of perspective or alley could afford the faintest glimpse of the scaffold.

The sight was evidently considered so grand, that it was something to be even half a mile away from it. There was a ground-swell of swearing and howling, and a host of ruffians half maddened by not being able to see the gentleman banker "turned off." A cruel envy and hatred, and a still more horrible heartlessness, filled the minds of those wretches. Every window and house-roof near Newgate was crowded with amateurs of executions, well-bred men whose manners had furnished subjects for shilling books on etiquette. Unsexed women shouted and sang below the windows let out at such profitable sums. Men, drinking to keep out the cold, declared the crowd was equal to that which had witnessed Thistlewood and his gang swung out of the world for their crimes.

At a quarter before eight, the sheriffs had entered the prisoner's room. Fauntleroy (it is a mockery to say Mr. now) lifted his eyes sadly, and, seeing them, bowed, but said nothing. The instincts of the gentleman were still there. Besides the ordinary of Newgate—the Rev. Mr. Cotton (whose name thieves used to pun on)—Mr. Baker was with the prisoner, and the Rev. Mr. Springett had borne with him the agony of the previous night's bitter sorrow and repentance.

Fauntleroy, still true to the traditions of respectability, was dressed in a black coat and trousers, with silk stockings and evening dress shoes. He was perfectly composed. His face showed no change since the trial. His eyes were closed. Even this hour was perhaps preferable to the long torture of those nine years of self-accusation.

The moment came. The silent but unmistakable gesture called him. There was no delay. Nothing could stop those preparations but the sudden death of one man. The sheriffs moved forward with serious faces. The ordinary passed on, after set form. No one required teaching as to his place in the ghastly procession. Mr. Baker and Mr. Springett, true friends even now, took each an arm of Fauntleroy, and followed the sheriffs and Mr. Cotton. The wretched man never turned his head right or left till he reached the foot of the steps leading to the scaffold—no longer the velvet-carpeted stairs, but rough deal planks fresh from the saw. He passed up to the scaffold, where the hard grim man stood to welcome him and arrange him for death.

The moment he appeared, a strange thrill went through thousands of hearts. The black dim

mob turned white—every hat went off in the twinkling of an eye. In less than two minutes the body of Fauntleroy, the banker, swayed in the murky November air.

Fauntleroy's doom was so thoroughly recognised as well merited, that although, in 1832, every other kind of forger was exempted by law from the gallows, the hands of the hangman still hovered over the forger of wills and of powers of attorney to transfer stock. Meanwhile, only two other executions for forgery took place:—Joseph Hunton, a Quaker linendraper, having forged and uttered several bills of exchange, was arrested in the cabin of the ship in which he had tried to escape to America; and although the jury recommended him strongly to mercy, he was hung in December, 1828. The last execution for forgery was that of Thomas Maynard, in the following year, for forging a custom-house warrant. In 1837 the capital punishment for that crime was abolished.

A ghastly anecdote, illustrative of the deep sincerity of dinner-friendships, and the profound attachment whereof boon companions are capable, long survived this miserable man, and was, within these twenty years, told for truth by one of his generation. His elegant dinners had been particularly renowned for some remarkable and unmatched Curaçoa. He had been frequently asked at his own table of whom he bought it, but always kept the secret. When he was ordered for execution, three friends, bound to him by the remembrance of many feasts and many glasses of this famous liqueur, had a parting interview with him in his Condemned Cell. They had discharged themselves of such edifying remarks as they had brought with them, and had taken their final leave of him and were about to retire, when the most impressive of the three stepped back, and said, "Fauntleroy, you stand on the verge of the tomb, and Eternity awaits you. We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can take nothing out. At so supreme a moment, have you any objection to say how, and of whom, you procured that Curaçoa?"

#### FRENCH TREATMENT OF THE DROWNED.

Not a cloud in the blue sky, with the exception of a few small white streaks in the east, which denoted wind. The pier at Boulogne was crowded with loungers awaiting the arrival of the Folkestone boat, the double white funnel of which was just discernible on the verge of the horizon. The tide was coming in strong, the bathing-women were reaping a good harvest. Bathing at Boulogne is not unattended with danger. A boat belonging to the "Société de Naufrage" is always out during bathing-hours to warn back too adventurous swimmers, or to rescue persons in danger. The sea, on the day in question, was not stormy, but there was a swell; the green crisp waves, as they rolled in, curled before they broke and washed far up the sand.

Suddenly a shriek of agony startled the bathers and spectators. A young soldier had taken two horses into the sea; but, not being aware of the treacherous conformation of the ground and the power of the tide, he had ventured out too far, and man and horses suddenly sank in deep water. The boat at once pulled towards the spot. Like others, I hastily swam back to the machine, huddled on my clothes, and joined an anxious crowd just as the apparently lifeless body of the soldier was placed on a sort of stretcher on wheels, to be conveyed to that small yellow house familiar to every visitor at Boulogne, close to the Etablissement, called *Maison de Sauvetege*. Two sergents-de-ville prevented persons from entering. They were stopping me; but, on my presenting my card, the magic "open sesame," "journaliste," admitted me at once.

The doctor, two attendants, four private soldiers, and two or three officials, were in the place. It is a clean, airy, well-ventilated room, with four beds without curtains, a table, and some wooden chairs. On one of these beds the drowned man was placed. The four soldiers stripped him, the usual warm applications were resorted to, and rubbing of the body was vigorously performed. The man lay motionless, but life was not extinct. I stood at the head of the bed anxiously watching his eyes, which had a dull glazed look, but not the look of death.

The doctor now did what, in England, is seldom, if ever, done. He bled the patient in the left arm. The blood trickled, and, as the rubbing continued, the body was soon covered with blood, until it was sponged off by one of the attendants with warm water. Still there were no signs of motion. The doctor then forced the point of a small pair of bellows into the man's mouth, with a view to inflate the lungs; but without effect. He then drew a deep breath, and, placing his lips upon those of the dying man, endeavoured to blow warm life into him. This he repeated twice. All this took place in a very few moments.

The shadow of death suddenly passed over the man's face. I looked at the doctor, who with his thumb gently raised the upper eyelid and shook his head. I placed my hand on the chest of the dead soldier. It was cold clay. "He is dead?" I said, inquiringly. The doctor shrugged his shoulders, and put on his hat. We left the room together.

All that was done to save that poor fellow's life was well and promptly done. The question as to the propriety of bleeding in cases of drowning, is one which appertains to the realm of medical science. In Italy it is usually resorted to. Indeed, bleeding is there so usual, that every barber carries a lancet. If an Italian feel heavy in the head, he has a "sallazzo"—that is to say, he enters a barber's shop, bares his arm, and is bled. Cavour, according to some, was positively bled to death.

We have a receiving-house for the drowned, near the *Serpentine*. Here, the hot bath is used instead of bleeding, and many imprudent

skaters have been saved by that simple remedy. The matter may be worth the consideration of French authorities.

## KÄTCHEN'S CAPRICES.

### IN TEN CHAPTERS. CHAPTER I.

It was a pretty picture, prettily set, that fair young face crowned with a lavish abundance of plaited tresses, looking forth from the quaintly carved window-frame! The owner of the face was Katerina Kester; and if you had lived in the village of Gossan, or within twenty English miles of it, I should not have needed to say more. You would have known her by reputation, if not by sight. But as it is, I had better explain who she was. Katerina's father, Josef Kester, kept an inn at the village of Gossan, in Upper Austria, close to the beautiful lake of Hallstadt. Not the inn where travellers stopped to dine and bait their horses, and whence they took boats for excursions on the lake; that was the *Black Eagle*. Josef's hostelry bore the sign of the Golden Lamb, and was of much humbler pretensions, being frequented only by the country-people, or occasionally receiving a footsore "Bursch," or German travelling workman, tramping through his probationary year of apprenticeship. The *Black Eagle* was flourishing, the *Golden Lamb* was decaying. The epithets black and golden might, indeed, have been reversed in their case; for the eagle had a glaring gilt beak and gilt talons, and a bright gilt crown on each of his two cruel-looking heads; while to believe that the poor lamb had ever been golden, was a strain on one's faith, so begrimed and dingy had he grown, with the blackening effects of time and weather. But the lamb, whether black or golden, possessed something of more beauty, ay, and some people thought of more value, than any article within the well-furnished rooms, guarded by the fierce, spruce, double-headed eagle. Katerina Kester, the landlord's daughter, was famed among the Gossaners, and for many a mile around Gossan, as being the prettiest girl in those parts. That might not be saying that she was really beautiful; for gloriously bountiful as Nature has been in making the surrounding scenery delightful to the eyes, she has not scattered female loveliness amongst its inhabitants with so lavish a hand. The women are in general tall and strong, but meagre, bony, brown-skinned, and betraying the effects of hard work and hard fare, by a premature appearance of age. Katerina, however, was as fresh and fair and rounded as a Hebe. Her mother had been a Saxon woman, from Tina on the Elbe; and from her, Katerina inherited a blonde peach-like skin, large limpid light-blue eyes, and an enormous wealth of fair hair. This hair was splendid from its silky quality and great quantity; but it had not the warm richness of colour which painters love. It was not golden, but resembled rather the pale brightness of moonlight than the dazzling glow of sunshine; and when uncoiled it fell down straight on her knees in a silky mass,



unbroken by one ripple. So much for the picture; now for its frame. The Golden Lamb was an old house built chiefly of timber, and it had a great balcony running along two sides of it, whence a fine view up and down the lake was to be had. The window of Katerina's room was surrounded by carved woodwork, and garnished by a creeping plant, which thrust its delicate tresses even into the chamber when the frame filled with small glass panes was hooked back to admit the fresh air. On this particular Sunday morning the summer breeze came softly in at the window, heightening the rose on Kätchen's cheek, ruffling the bright smooth lake into dimples, and displaying the grace and lightness of the woodbine, that waved backwards and forwards with a rocking movement.

"Ah, what a fine day!" thought Katerina. "Dry and bright, but not too hot. Last night's shower will have laid the dust on the highway. How nice!" Katerina did not appreciate the full beauty of the grand scene that lay stretched out before her bedroom window. Lake and mountain were familiar to her sight, and, if I must tell the truth, our village belle was fonder of receiving than of giving admiration. It seemed to her very natural that people who had known her from a child should take unwearying pleasure in gazing on her pretty face, and extolling the length and softness of her hair. But if you had made any great demand on Katerina's powers of admiration on behalf of the lake and the mountains, she would have turned away with a pettish look, and would have told you that she had seen them every day—every day since she was born. The Kesters were Protestants, and attended service at the evangelical church in Hallstadt. Now, to go from Gossan to Hallstadt there is but one really practicable way, and that is to row thither in a boat on the lake; therefore it seems odd that Kätchen should have cared about the dust on the high road. But Kätchen had a lover who was the owner of a stout travelling-carriage and good team of horses, and who being, moreover, a steady driver, and a smart, honest young fellow, was often employed to convey travellers along the more unfrequented routes in the beautiful lake district—routes where railways were not, and diligences even few and far between. This lover, Fritz Rosenheim, was expected to-day at Gossan. He had passed through the village the week before on his way to Ischl, and was to return towards Salzburg on this bright Sunday morning. For this reason the state of the road was interesting to Kätchen. There was no regular engagement between her and Fritz Rosenheim. Old Josef Kester set himself very much against the idea of such a thing. He liked Fritz heartily, and was glad to see him, but—Fritz was poor. That was a misfortune from which the landlord of the Golden Lamb had suffered severely; and he was wont to say that he would never willingly expose his child to the cold nipping airs of poverty. But Gossan folks maintained that Josef Kester had started in life with as good prospects as most men, and that it was mainly his own fault if things had gone

ill with him, and the poor "Lamb" had gradually been shorn of its golden fleece. Gossan folks were not less hard in their judgment of the unsuccessful man than London folks, or Paris folks. But there was a grain of truth in what they said, for all that. Josef had too much of the inert passive good humour which distinguishes many of his countrymen, to push his way energetically through the world. Perhaps he could reckon as many pleasant hours in his past life as the richest of his neighbours. But the pleasant hours were over and gone, and had left him with empty pockets to look old age in the face. The hard-working, well-to-do neighbours might sometimes—but this they never acknowledged—envy the clear smooth forehead and placid smile which made old Josef look younger than his years; but they had only to put their hands in their pockets, and feel a soft bundle of very dirty and tattered bank-notes, to recover their self-esteem and good spirits immediately.

Kätchen drew in her head from the window, and went to take one more look at herself in the green mirror, which distorted her pretty face in a heart-breaking manner. But Kätchen knew the original by heart, and was not distressed by the bad translation she beheld in her glass. She proceeded to perch a tall sugar-loaf black hat on the top of her thick plaits of hair, and to stick a long silver arrow into the coil at the back.

"Kätchen! Kätchen!" called her father, from the lake below. He was sitting in a little boat just beneath her window, dressed in his best clothes, and ready to row to Hallstadt to church. "Make haste, my child, service will have begun."

"Coming, father, coming," said Kätchen, as she ran swiftly down the stairs, through the open house door, and stepped into the little boat that lay rocking gently, within a stone's throw of the inn. Kätchen stood up in the boat, and took an oar, which she managed with strength and skill. All the young women about Hallstadt and Gossan were used to propel themselves about the lake, and to handle an oar was as ordinary an accomplishment as to wield a knitting-needle. Kätchen rowed standing, and at every dip of her paddle into the water she bent well forward, displaying in the action a plump, well-turned leg and neat ankle, encased in the Sunday gear of white stockings and stout black boots.

"Fine bright day, Herr Kester," shouted a neighbour, whose boat, propelled by four stout damsels, shot past Kätchen's.

"Ay, very fine, very fine. Bright, as you say, but not sultry. Any news up your way?"

"Nothing very interesting," bawled back the neighbour, whose boat was rapidly shooting ahead of the Kesters' little craft. "Only one thing your Kätchen may care to hear. Fritz Rosenheim got a return fare at Ischl. Some foreigners wanted to go back to Salzburg the very day he was coming away. Lucky for him, isn't it?"

"My Kätchen doesn't care a button about it," roared Josef, angrily; but it is to be feared his words did not reach the ears for

which they were intended. Kätchen's pink cheeks grew scarlet, and she knit her flaxen eyebrows.

"Why should you say that, father?" she asked, pettishly. "I *do* care a button, more than a button, for Fritz's good luck."

"You don't care in the way neighbour Nelbeck meant. And I don't choose to allow folks to talk to me as if you did, Kätchen."

"But, father, I do care——"

"Nonsense! You think you do when you're contradicted, but it's all moonshine. You know you wouldn't marry Fritz, if I gave my consent to-morrow."

"Will you try me, father?"

"No, I won't. I disapprove of the whole thing. The prettiest girl in the district to throw herself away on a poor devil of a kutscher—a fellow who knows nothing in the world but how to guide his horses up and down the mountain roads, rain or hail, shade or shine—it's monstrous! And you, that might do so much better, too! Better, dowerless as you are, than many a well-portioned lass I could mention."

The boat grazed the pebbly landing-place at Hallstadt whilst Josef Kester was still in the midst of his grumblings against Kätchen, against his poverty, against his neighbours, and especially against the guilty Fritz—guilty, by his own confession, of being in love with a pretty girl whose father did not want him as a son-in-law. The crime is heinous, though, alas! too common. But old Josef's discontent dispersed itself in words, and left him placid and smiling as usual, when he walked into the little evangelical place of worship, followed by his pretty daughter.

#### CHAPTER II.

KÄTCHEN sat very still during the long controversial discourse that flew high over the heads of the simple congregation. Very still and seemingly attentive sat little Kätchen, but her thoughts were busily occupied, and *not* with the sermon. "Was she really, really so fond of Fritz after all? or was her father right in saying it was only moonshine?" She acknowledged to herself that she never did feel so kindly disposed towards her lover as when some sage adviser set before her the folly and unsuitableness of marrying him. Next to *this* spur to her affections, came the idea of any other girl winning Fritz Rosenheim. The young man was very popular, and in his roving life he had opportunities of making many acquaintances. Smart chambermaids at the big hotels in Salzburg and Ischl knew and smiled upon him. Even landladies' daughters at the mountain inns condescended to a little flirtation with the good-looking kutscher. And his unflagging good humour and gallant bearing towards the fair, made the jingle of his horses' bells a very welcome sound to many feminine ears along his line of route. But then——To be sure it was very nice to have Fritz so admiring and so devoted, and to hear him protest that there was not in all Austria, nay, in all Germany, a girl

fit to wipe the little shoes of Katerina Kester. Yes, that was pleasant, without doubt. But it wouldn't last so! Fritz couldn't be content to let that agreeable state of things continue comfortably. It was very unreasonable of him, but he actually wanted to have a formal promise of marriage from his idol, and to be publicly betrothed to her. Kätchen gave such an impatient little shiver at the idea of being irrevocably bound to marry Fritz, and tossed up her head so like a wild colt that has never known bit or bridle, that I, for my part, believe her father to have been right about the moonshine, and that she wasn't so very much in love after all.

The cessation of the pastor's sonorous German polysyllables startled her from a reverie. Kätchen was not much given to reverie in general, but there was still a wide-eyed look of abstraction on her countenance as she walked forth with her father from the little church. At the entrance they came on quite a crowd of country-folks, some of whom had just been hearing mass in the Catholic chapel. A rosy, well-fed couple of Sisters of Mercy passed through the knot of people, receiving pleasant and respectful salutations alike from the orthodox and the heretics. Josef Kester was known to everybody, and stood for some time exchanging gossip with his neighbours, and taking long luxurious pulls at the gaudy china pipe suspended by a green cord round his neck. Kätchen, still in an unusually thoughtful mood, walked slowly down to the brink of the lake, whence a narrow wooden plank ran out a short distance into the water, for the convenience of boatmen and their passengers. Kätchen seated herself on a pile of wood cut and stacked for fuel, and stared absently at the lake, and the opposite hills rich in colour, and steeped in a great glory of sunlight.

"Good day, Mam'sell Katerina," said a high thin voice close at her ear. She started and looked round. The address was unusually formal and respectful. Her own acquaintance never bestowed on her the title of "Mam'sell," and usually abbreviated the utterance of her christian name. The polite speaker was a tall spare man of about five and forty, with a very high bald forehead, a sallow face, and thick hay-coloured moustaches. He wore spectacles, and blinked very much with his light grey eyes. "Good day, Mam'sell Katerina," said he again, seeing that Kätchen stared at him without speaking. "I fear you do not recognise me. I am Caspar Ebner, the landlord of the Black Eagle in Gossan, at your service." And he drew himself up a little, and twisted his fingers in a heavy silver watch-chain that crossed his black satin waistcoat. Herr Ebner wore a suit of dark blue cloth, with gilt buttons, a tall shiny French hat, and the black satin waistcoat aforesaid.

"Thou dear Heaven!" cried Kätchen, jumping up from her seat, and making a little curtsey. "I beg your pardon, Herr Ebner, but I couldn't for the moment think who it was." She might have added that her surprise

was not much diminished when she did know who it was; for the rich landlord of the Black Eagle had never accosted her in her life before, though she knew him by sight well enough, and had sometimes fancied he looked at her with a certain amount of admiration.

"The Herr Pastor was somewhat lengthy to-day," said Ebner, half seating himself on the log of wood on which Kätchen had resumed her place.

"Was he?" asked she, without thinking of what she was saying, for her brain was busily trying to puzzle out why Herr Ebner should speak to her.

"Yes; somewhat lengthy. At least, I fancied so. You were a more devout and attentive listener, mam'sell. I observed your absorption."

Kätchen coloured, partly from a prick of conscience, partly at the idea of having been watched. Then the thought that was in her mind came to her tongue, although she had not wished to betray it. "I never saw you in church before, Herr Ebner," said she.

It was now the landlord's turn to colour; that is to say, the lemon hue of his face deepened to orange. "Most likely not, Mam'sell Katerina. I—in fact, I don't go to church in a usual way. I read though, and think a good deal on these subjects, and I have formed, I confess, certain theories, which—" Here he stopped abruptly, catching Kätchen's point-blank stare of bewilderment. "I—I beg pardon. These grave and speculative topics are hardly suited to one so young, and—and—ahem—so lovely as yourself."

"Here's father," cried Kätchen, with an unmistakable look of relief; and she even made a little step towards her father and away from Ebner.

"Good day, Herr Ebner," said Kester, pulling off his soft felt hat, a courtesy which the other instantly requited by lifting his own stiff shiny head-covering high in the air. "I've been staying behind to have a little chat with some old neighbours, and kept this young woman of mine waiting, you see."

Old Kester glanced sharply at his daughter as he spoke, and Kätchen noticed that her father did not seem nearly so much surprised as she had been to see the host of the Black Eagle speaking so affably to her.

"I am—I mean—are you," stammered Ebner, with an awkward hesitation.

"Are we going to row back to Gossan now? Yes, we are," said Kester, promptly.

"My boat is here, with three of the boatmen from St. Emmerau. Would you—that is, if Mam'sell Katerina—it's hot, rowing in the middle of the day—"

"Thank you, Herr Ebner," responded the rival landlord, with—to Kätchen—astonishing alacrity; and then, before she understood the arrangement clearly, she was handed into Ebner's boat and seated in state on a cushioned bench under an awning, instead of standing up with a heavy paddle in her sunburnt hand. One of the boatmen made Kester's deserted little craft fast to the stern of the larger boat, and away they

went, swiftly, cutting a bright furrow through the glassy water, and breaking into fragments the peaceful shadows of the great hills that lay deep in the lake with their peaks pointing downward into a second and still bluer heaven than that which stretched overhead. Kätchen was bewildered. That she should be in a boat at all, without aiding to propel that boat, was wonderful; but that the Black Eagle should have doffed his usual imperial fierceness, and—instead of sticking his long talons into the fleece of the Golden Lamb—should coo with dove-like softness, and invite his rival even into his own nest—this was more wonderful by far. Not that Caspar Ebner was really very fierce in himself. But Kätchen was used to think of him as a very high and mighty personage—one to whose successful rapacity was partly owing the decay and ill fortune that hung about the meeker Lamb. Josef Kester's ill success was, on his own showing, always "somebody else's" fault. In this respect, perhaps, Josef Kester was not entirely singular. And so the indefinite "somebody else" who wrought all the mischief to the Golden Lamb had gradually taken shape in Kätchen's mind, and Herr Caspar Ebner was its living embodiment.

Many an evening in the old rafted kitchen of the inn had Kätchen listened to her father's long speeches, uttered oracularly from behind dense clouds of coarse tobacco-smoke, when the old man would descant on the Lamb's ill treatment and the undeserved prosperity of the Eagle, and lament the strange perversity of travellers who *would* frequent Herr Ebner's house, to the neglect and detriment of his own establishment. And now, behold here was her father sitting placidly under the enemy's awning, rowed luxuriously by the enemy's boatmen, and chatting cheerfully with the enemy himself! The boat scudded along lightly, bounding to the strong strokes of the rowers, and soon reached the landing-place at Gossan, where Kätchen was handed out by Herr Ebner, with much politeness, though a little awkwardly. She and her father bade him farewell, and thanked him, and were about to draw their own little boat up high and dry on the beach, but Ebner desired his own boatmen to do that, and asked Kester and Kätchen to do him the honour of dining with him, as the mid-day meal was just ready. Josef made some little objection, but only by way of what he considered good manners; for he finally accepted the invitation for his daughter and himself, and they followed their host into his private sitting-room at the Black Eagle. It was a pleasant apartment on the ground floor, with windows looking on to the lake. Here the cloth was laid for dinner, and a tall chambermaid came forward to take Kätchen's hat from her, and to offer her any assistance she might need in the arrangement of her dress. She had, of course, taken the cue from her master's behaviour, for Kätchen knew well enough that at most times Therese would consider herself quite above waiting on the daughter of old Josef Kester, of the Golden Lamb. The dinner was very good and the

wine excellent, but somehow the little party did not seem to be quite at ease. Josef, it is true, ate and drank unrestrained by shyness; but Kätchen was too full of wonder at the unexpected honour to feel much appetite, and Herr Ebner blinked nervously through his spectacles, and hesitated and stammered in his speech in a very disconcerting manner. When the dinner was over, the guests rose to take their leave, Josef protesting that he must go, as he had "so many things to attend to." Ebner accompanied them to the entrance-hall, and there bashfully offered a bunch of roses to Kätchen. He had had them gathered in his little garden during dinner-time, and now they were lying ready to be presented in a tasteful little straw basket. Kätchen took the fragrant June roses with a smile and a bright blush of pleasure. It was certainly very nice to be treated like a real lady, and she was quite enough of a coquette to enjoy the consciousness of being admired. But all of a sudden she gave a start, and the colour left her round cheeks for a moment, to rush back deeper than before; for there stood Fritz Rosenheim right in the doorway, looking at her in blank astonishment. He had a long driving-whip in his hand and wore his smartest suit—a bright blue postillion's jacket, studded with silver buttons, leathern breeches, and high boots coming above the knee; and in his low-crowned hat, stuck on one side of his head, was fastened a bunch of rich red carnations, the gift, probably, of some coquettish chambermaid or landlady along his line of route.

"Good day, Fritz," said Kätchen, desperately, speaking first; for poor Fritz's presence of mind seemed clean gone. He muttered some salutation in reply, and then turned to grasp the hand which Josef Kester heartily held out to him. "Welcome, Fritz, my boy," said he; "I expected you to-day, for I heard news of you from old Nelbeck." Then Fritz dropped his hat respectfully to the landlord of the Black Eagle, who gravely nodded in return.

"I've brought some travellers from Ischl, sir," said Fritz; "a foreign lady and gentleman and their courier. I told them they couldn't be anywhere better treated or more comfortable than at the Black Eagle in Gossau."

"They will be taken care of, kutscher. I hope you have seen to your horses. Yes—eh? Well, then, go and tell the keller to give you a bottle of Rudesheimer to drink my health in."

Fritz touched his hat again, and made way for the Kesters to pass out. Josef said, as he went away, "See you to-night, Fritz; you'll come and smoke a pipe in the old kitchen as usual."

Kätchen walked home in a state of ill humour that darkened her pretty childish face. She was vexed that Fritz should have come upon her just when he did—vexed to see him touch his hat like a servant to the man at whose table she

had been dining—vexed with poor Herr Ebner for his good nature in treating the kutscher to wine. Why should Fritz accept his wine? He was able to pay for it. And vexed above all with her father for inviting the young man to come and "smoke a pipe in the kitchen as usual." As usual! What would the landlord of the Black Eagle think of them? He never smoked pipes in the kitchen with a kutscher. This last was a very unworthy thought, and ungenerous towards Fritz, who would never have been ashamed of association with her before the highest in the land. But then I really do believe old Josef had been right about the moonshine. Still, objecting as he did to any semblance of love-making between Rosenheim and his daughter, he should not have encouraged the young man to come to his house. But this was Josef's way—one of the many weaknesses in his easy-going nature that had helped to smooth the down-hill path on which he had slidden so rapidly from comfort to poverty. He liked Fritz. The young fellow's cheery talk and pleasant manner, and the news he brought from the busier world he traversed in his journeys, were very agreeable stimulants after the sluggish monotony of life at the Golden Lamb. And, like many inert men, Josef Kester loved nothing better than to witness and hear of traits of energy and activity in which he was not expected to participate. As to the after consequences of all this familiar intercourse, why, that would come all right somehow. The young folks would make love a little—why not?—but it would be all in a wild and purposeless sort of way, that would hurt neither of them very deeply. He could be very angry when any one took it for granted that the moonshine meant something real, and spoke as old Nelbeck had spoken. Not the less angry, perhaps, from a secret self-reproach in the matter. But the moment Fritz reappeared he could not resist the temptation of his company, and, besides, the young man *couldn't* be so desperately in earnest. In this he was thoroughly mistaken; but it was a comfortable theory, which lightened his own responsibility, and therefore Josef Kester clung to it.

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